OUR SAVIOUR's DIVINE SERMON ON THE *MOUNT*,

CONTAIN'D

In the Vth, VIth, and VIIth Chapters of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, Explained, and the Practice of it Recommended in diverſe Sermons and Diſcourſes,

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING

XXIII SERMONS on the *Beatitudes*.

To which is Prefix'd,

A *PARAPHRASE*

On the whole Sermon on the *Mount*.

By JAMES BLAIR, M. A.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Right Reverend Father in God,

JOHN,

Lord Biſhop of *London.*

My Lord,

HAving had the Honour for above theſe Thirty Years to bear a Commiſſion under your Lordſhip, and your Worthy Predeceſſor; and the Happineſs likewiſe to have been as long ſupported by your juſt and generous Protection, and Encouragement; I do moſt gladly lay hold on this Publick Opportunity of acknowledging to the World, the many Obligations of Gratitude I lie under

to ſuch truly Good and Noble Patrons. But this is but One of the Many Reaſons that induce me to prefix your Lordſhip's Name to theſe Diſcourſes, and to ſubmit them to your Judgment, and to pray your Acceptance and Encouragement of them. Being entruſted under your Lordſhip with a Cure of Souls in a far diſtant Country, where both Clergy and Laity are deprived of the Benefit your Dioceſe in *England* enjoys under your more immediate Epiſcopal Inſpection, I thought nothing could be more proper than to preſent your Lordſhip with a Sample of our remote Miniſterial Labours. To paſs by other Reaſons for my Choice of this noble Subject; it is a particular Felicity of that Country, not to be infeſted with the Enemies of the Chriſtian Faith; ſo that we have little or no Occaſion in our Sermons to enter the Liſts with Atheiſts, Deiſts, Arians or Socinians; nor are we much troubled with either Popiſh or Proteſtant

ſtant Recuſants; or any of thoſe unhappy Diſtinctions, by which the Church of *England* is moſt unfortunately ſubdivided in this our Mother Country. Yet we find Work enough (and more than our few Labourers can accompliſh) to encounter the uſual Corruptions of Mankind, Ignorance, Inconſideration, Practical Unbelief, Impenitence, Impiety, Worldly-mindedneſs, and other Common Immoralities. For which Reaſon, the Practical Part of Religion being the Chief part of our Paſtoral Care, I was eaſily inclined to fix my Meditations on *our Saviour's Divine Sermon on the Mount*; as knowing that Chriſtian Duties were there both very plainly Taught, and yet carried to a degree of Perfection beyond what the World ever knew before, or is perhaps as yet duly ſenſible of. It pleaſed God to favour my Study on this noble Subject with ſome very uſeful Diſcoveries, which caſt a better Light both into the Scope of the whole Sermon;

and the Meaning and Order of the great Duties it treats of. And I made it my Buſineſs to apply all with as great a degree of Zeal and Concern for the good of Souls as I was capable of. I hope the Doctrine will be found Sound and Orthodox, and the Style plain for the uſe of the Meaneſt Hearers. I wiſh I could add likewiſe, and ſo Grave and Serious, ſo Rouſing and Awakening, ſo Weighty and Divine, and ſo becoming the Noble Argument it handles; that Perſons of the beſt Capacities and Diſpoſitions may find a ſuitable Entertainment: But ſuch as it is, I hope it will do good to Perſons of all Capacities, if they bring any degree of good Temper of Mind along with them.

There is one thing more I have aimed at, with an Eye to the Clergy, as well as the Laity under my Care; but am conſcious to my ſelf of having fallen far ſhort of it; it is ſomething relating to the manner of handling Divine

Sub-

Subjects. I can't forbear mentioning it, though there is but a weak Attempt made here towards it; But if duly cultivated and improved, I will venture to ſay it will be a great Beauty and Ornament of our Pulpit Performances. What I mean is, that I have endeavoured not only to avoid the running out into general Topicks, to ſpend the time; but to confine the Diſcourſes to the main Subjects of the ſeveral Texts; and ſo to cloath every Diſcourſe with the true Notion of its Text, that nothing may be ſaid upon it but what is in ſome Senſe peculiar to it; and would not fall in ſo properly from any other. I have always looked upon it as a Thing of mighty Importance, that our People ſhould be ſatisfied, we do not Preach up our own Notions, but thoſe of the *Holy Scriptures*; which carry their Light and Authority along with them. This Method, its true, makes Sermons very ſhort, by cutting off long Prefaces, uſeleſs Digreſſions, Common Place Caſes

and Queſtions, remote Repetitions *ab Ovo*; and ſome other Pulpit Excurſions, where, perhaps, though the Matter is good, it is not ſo well ſuited to the Text, from whence it ſhould derive its Authority. But this Brevity I think is far from being any Inconveniency in thoſe Performances; for all ſuch Things as are Foreign to the Subject, ſerve only to Bury the true Oar of Divine Truths in Heaps of Rubbiſh, which would be much more uſeful, and perhaps more acceptable too, if it were to appear in its own native Splendour. If ſtill this is thought too great a Reſtraint to the fancy in our Compoſitions, it is eaſily remedied by taking a longer Text, which will ſupply the barreneſt Invention much better, than by racking our Brains to ſuit Impertinent Matter to a Subject to which it does not belong. But the Judgment of all this, as well as of ſeveral other uncommon Obſervations on this Excellent Subject, tending to the clearer Explication

cation of the Meaning, and the opening up of the Deſign and Method of it, is with profound Reverence ſubmitted to your Lordſhip, and the other Fathers of the Church; Some of whom, to whoſe Sentiments we owe the greateſt Deference, having vouchafed to peruſe a few of theſe Diſcourſes, did ſo earneſtly adviſe the Publication of them, that I could not reſiſt them, as I had done the Importunity of ſome of my other good Friends of the Inferiour Clergy. I wiſh their favourable Opinion of the Uſefulneſs of the Performance, may be anſwered in a more diligent Conſideration and Practice of Chriſtian Morals, and in the Revival of the true Spirit of Chriſtianity, which, alas, is ſo viſibly decayed in all Parts of the World. And as this was my principal Deſign in compoſing theſe Diſcourſes. God grant I may ſo tranſcribe them into my own Heart and Life, that while I Preach the Goſpel to others, I my ſelf may not be a caſt-away.

If

If theſe Diſcourſes prove any way ſerviceable to the Publick, I muſt acknowledge the Leiſure and Freedom of Mind I enjoyed in compoſing them, was very much owing to your Lordſhip's Favour; being thereby delivered from the Anxiety that might attend encumber'd Circumſtances, and in a Condition to apply my Thoughts more cloſely to Divine Subjects. That God may Water with his Bleſſing the Studies and Labours of all your Lordſhip's Numerous Clergy, particularly of thoſe who have devoted their Service to the Cultivation of that more neglected Part of the Lord's Vineyard, our Foreign Plantations in *America*, where though the Harveſt is Great, the Labourers are but Few; is the Hearty Prayer of

My LORD,

Your Lordſhip's moſt Humble,
moſt Obedient and moſt Obliged,
Servant and Commiſſary,

JAMES BLAIR.

PREFACE.

SOME, *I doubt not, will think it very ſtrange, after the Labours of ſo many, both Ancient and Modern Commentators on this excellent* Sermon on the Mount, *that an obſcure Perſon, and from an obſcure Corner of the World, ſhould pretend to any further Diſcoveries on ſo well cultivated a Subject. It may reaſonably be preſumed, that all ſuch a one can ſay muſt be the ſame thing over again, perhaps with a little new Turn of Thought, and Variation of Method and Expreſſion. This I confeſs is frequently the Caſe with Writers on the Holy Scriptures, and therefore I muſt expect, upon this Preſumption, the far greater part*

of

of Students, and others, will never ſo much as vouchafe to look into theſe Writings. But if they do, they will quickly be undeceived; inſomuch that I am afraid they will then accuſe me of a contrary Error, namely of giving my ſelf too much Liberty to ſtep out of the common Road; and will be perfectly ſurpriſed in ſuch a Practical Part of Scripture, where one might expect all things plain, and no Room left for different Interpretations, to find ſo many things that have a new Air, and do really in many Points give a different View of this Text, from the Generality of thoſe that have hitherto paſt upon the World. This has been no ſmall matter of Admiration to my ſelf in theſe Meditations; and I ſhall endeavour to give ſome Account of it to my Ingenuous Reader, ſuppoſing him to be ſuch a one, whoſe Underſtanding is not ſtrongly byaſſed by any Party; far leſs by an implicit Faith, ſo bound up to their Sentiments, as to think it a Fault upon good Reaſons to differ from them. For though it is confeſſed that this is a very Practical Portion of Scripture, as any is in the whole Bible; I can't grant

that

that the Practical Parts of Scripture are all ſo plain, that he who runs may Read them. It is neceſſary for apprehending the Meaning of Them, *as well as of Texts of Controverſy; that the Original Phraſes be rightly underſtood, together with the Coherence and Connexion of the Words; and the Scope and Deſign of the whole Diſcourſe. Let any* Man *try it, not only in the Holy Scriptures, but in any other Ancient Author, and he ſhall find that it requires a good deal of Pains to find out the Scope, and of Skill and attention, to apprehend the right Senſe and* Meaning. *As far as I have had opportunity to obſerve, of all the Texts of Scripture, it is the Practical ones, which want the moſt Induſtry and Diligence to cultivate and improve them: For beſides Skill in Languages and Criticiſms, there is a ſuitable Frame of Heart, and an Experimental Knowledge of the Chriſtian Virtues in the Life and Converſation, requiſite to the right apprehending of them; And how rarely are theſe two, this and Criticiſme I mean, in conjunction? And yet both very neceſſary for underſtanding aright the great*

Duties

Duties of the Goſpel? Our Adverſaries too have driven us to a nice Search into the Meaning of Texts of Controverſy; But we have often I doubt, allowed our ſelves a greater Latitude in Practical Texts, where we had no Enemy to fear; and have been much leſs upon our Guard: Eſpecially where it has been the Cuſtom to Lecture daily upon great Portions of Scripture (as was the Cuſtom of ſome of our Reformers:) This has laid Men under the Temptation of taking for the true Senſe whatever preſented itſelf firſt to their Thoughts; having no Time to enquire curiouſly and nicely into the Difficulties that occurred, which would have often required a Week's hard Study to clear One or Two of them; whereas they have ſlightly run over Twenty of them in an Hour's time. Some have done yet Worſe; adventuring purely ex tempore *in their Houſes or Churches to expound or Lecture, and in their Lectures to ſpeak whatever came firſt into their Thoughts, taking that for the Suggeſtion of God's Holy Spirit. And it is not be believed, where Men have thus Right or Wrong, ſuddenly or pre-*

premeditately uttered their Opinion, how ſtifly they adhere to it; and what a Byaſs they give thereby, to all that are governed by their Authority and Example. I have really been amazed to ſee what a mighty Influence one Great Naime has had, to obtrude ſome of his crudeſt and leaſt ſtudied Interpretations upon whole Churches, not only of that, but of the ſucceeding Generations. If it has been my Fortune to diſcover many of theſe raſh Interpretations, and at laſt finding how often Commentators have been miſled with Names and Authority, If I have found it neceſſary to take nothing upon Truſt, but to examine Matters with diligence, and without Prejudice or Partiality; and if upon this Score I am ſometimes ſingular in my Thoughts, and leaving the common Road, have ſprung ſome new game, while every thing advanced is Sound and Orthodox, and has a good tendency to Piety; I hope I ſhall not for ſo doing, incur the cenſure of the Learned World; but rather deſerve their Thanks, for helping to extricate them from the Power and prevalency of vulgar Errors; and for retrieving

trieving ſome very uſeful Truths, which I humbly ſubmit to the equitable Judgment of all, who have any Genius for theſe ſacred Studies; being not only willing, but deſirous that the ſame Freedom, which I have uſed with others, may be uſed with me; and that nothing I have here advanced may have any further Credit, than the Grounds and Reaſons of it (which I have always taken care to ſet down, as often as I differ from others) will Juſtify and Support. The chief thing I have aimed at, and hope in ſome Meaſure to have attained, is a Juſt and True Explication of the Literal Senſe *of the Words, and the giving right Notions of the Chriſtian Duties therein deſcribed, with a ſerious Recommendation of the Practice of them. Though I have been large, eſpecially on ſome leſs cultivated Subjects, the Reader will find I have not allowed myſelf the leaſt liberty of wandring from the Text, or of running out into the Common Place. I have occaſionally explained diverſe other Texts, where I found they caſt light upon what I had under my Conſideration. And in the whole have, I think, obſerved many things,*

things, which are usually over-looked, tending to a fuller and clearer opening of this excellent Treasure of Christian Morals. One thing further it may be necessary to advertize, is, that after these Sermons were composed and Preached, the Labours of the late Learned Bishop of Exeter *on the same subject came to be Published: So that I hope the Reader will not think it strange, that nothing is borrowed from that Work; and will believe that where this Performance rejects some of those opinions there espoused, I could have no Eye to that Right Reverned Author, or any the least design to disparage his Work, which was then in his own Closet, and to me utterly unknown. I need not add that the Sermons being designed for a plain Countrey Auditory, without any thoughts at that Time of publishing them to the World, the Reader is to expect no further Excellency in the Style than Plainness and Perspicuity. If through the Blessing of God, they prove any way useful to cast Light on that admirable Portion of Holy Scripture,* the Sermon on the Mount; *and especially to recommend the great Christian Du-*

ties therein contained, I have my aim. Let God have the Glory, I hope too I ſhall gain another Point which will richly anſwer all my Labour, and is indeed the chief deſign of this Preface, which is, that from the Experiment here made, Students will be convinced that the Practical Subjects of the Holy Scriptures are ſo far from being as yet exhauſted by the Commentators, and other Writers upon them, that there are very extraordinary Gleanings left, or rather a Plentiful Harveſt ſtill, to reward the pains of the Diligent and Impartial Inquirer, who will take the courage to throw off the Chains of Cuſtom, and to betake himſelf to his fervent Prayers and vigorous Endeavours to find out the Truth. Think not that I am recommending any thing of Fancy or Enthuſiaſm; there is no Man further from it; for I know not any thing has made more bad Interpretations of Scripture than that has done. What I recommend is only the keeping the Mind in a good Temper; and a more careful Study of the Scripture itſelf, eſpecially of thoſe neglected Hints of the Context, which often ſerve for KEYS

to

to open up the whole Diſcourſe, to which they are annexed; to One of which diſcovering the Occaſion of this Sermon, not as yet taken notice of by any Interpreter that I have ſeen, and to another, concerning the proper Auditors of it, obſerved but by a few, I owe my Chief Aſſiſtance in the Explication I have given of the ſeveral Beatitudes, *and the other Parts of this Divine Sermon. What theſe are is opened in the three firſt Diſcourſes; to which I refer: Praying for a right underſtanding to my Readers in all things; and that they may take in good part my ſincere Endeavour to caſt light on this excellent Portion of Holy Scripture. From the Diſcoveries and Improvements here made, I hope ſome better Pens will adventure in the like manner on the Explication of other Practical Parts of Holy Writt, which from Experience I think I dare promiſe them will richly quit coſt; and that if they will Plow with the ſame Heifer, they ſhall find out many things which have hitherto layen hid in the Riddles of Darkneſs and Error.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN *these Discourses were first sent to the Press, a Partition of them was made into* Seven *Volumes; and the* Two First *for Expedition were put into Two several Presses. By that Partition the* First *Volume comprehended only the Paraphrase, and the first* Fourteen *Sermons, to the* Tenth *verse of the* Fifth *Chapter. But it being than perceived (a little too late) that by that Partition the Books would be too small; it was thought fit to reduce the* Seven *to* Five *just Volumes: And for enlarging the* First, *which was already wrought off, to add to it Nine Sermons, which had been design'd for the* Second, *compleating the Beatitudes; being in all XXIII Sermons; to the 13th verse of the* Fifth *Chapter; which has only this Inconveniency that the Pages begin again at Sermon* XV.

The other Four Volumes will regularly follow.

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Vol. III. XXIII Sermons from *Mat.* V. 27. to *Chap.* VI. 9.

Vol. IV. XXIV Sermons from *Mat.* VI. 9. to the End of the Sixth *Chap.*

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A PARAPHRASE ON Our Saviour's *SERMON* on the Mount,

Mat. v. vi. and vii. Chap.

Chapter V.

V. 1. *And* †*seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his Disciples came unto him.*

2. *And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,*

† Or, looking upon, see *Mark* 8. 33.

VERSE 1 and 2. By this time *Jesus* had acquired great Fame; the People being prepared for the Reception of him by *John* the *Baptist*, who had pointed him out as *the Messiah*; and his own wonderful Doctrine and Miracles, perswading a great many that observed them, that he was that Great King foretold by the Prophets, tho' till he had tryed the Affections of the People, they thought he would not take upon him that Cha-

 racter.

racter. However, many believed him to be *the Meſſiah*, and were baptized in his Name; and owned themſelves *his Diſciples*. And many more, tho' they did not as yet believe, looked upon him as a very extraordinary Perſon, that wrought great Miracles, and would perhaps, with the Aſſiſtance of the People, reſtore them to their Liberty. Vaſt Numbers of both ſorts followed him, but upon falſe Hopes, being all big with Expectations of great Wealth and Honour, Conqueſt and Revenge, and all manner of Gratifications of Luxury, in his Service. But the ſtrict Duties of the *Moral Law*, which ſecure Mens Lives, Liberties and Properties, ſtanding in the way of thoſe Ends, they expected the *Meſſiah* would abrogate that Law, tho' enjoined by *Moſes* and the Prophets; or at leaſt would diſpenſe with it to his Followers, 'till his Kingdom was thoroughly

roughly eſtabliſhed. *Jeſus* caſt an Eye of Pity on their Ignorance, and reſolved to take this publick Opportunity to undeceive them. For which end he went up into a Mountain, from whence he might be the better ſeen and heard: And calling all the Company of his Diſciples about him, he taught them thus in the Audience of the reſt of the People; who likewiſe followed him; and were attentive to his Doctrine.

Mat. vii. 28. *Luke* vii. 1.

Ye follow me indeed, ſaid he, *but it is upon falſe Hopes, with Minds full of Expectations of Wealth and Honour, Conqueſt and Revenge, and all other Gratifications of Luxury; in all which ye will meet with great Diſappointments. Alas, ye know not the true Nature of the* Meſſiah's *Kingdom, nor the true Spirit of his Diſciples, nor what are the happy Diſpoſitions of Mind neceſſary for his Service. And therefore I*

will briefly acquaint you with them.

3. It is not they who in their Hearts are graſping Riches, Dominion and Honour, that are fit for the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom; but the happy Perſons who ſhall be admitted into that Kingdom, are ſuch as have their Hearts and Minds diſengaged from the World: If they are Poor, they are contented; and if Rich, they ſet not their Hearts upon their Riches; nor are backward to uſe them for doing good; as aiming at no great Matters in this World.

3. Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

4. Nor is it the Men of Luxury and Pleaſure that are the fit Subjects of that Kingdom: But, on the contrary, the grave ſerious Men, who are well prepared to bear the Croſs, and moſt affected with true penitential Sorrow for their Sins. They ſhall meet with more ſolid Comforts under

4. Bleſſed are they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted.

der the *Meſſiah*, than all the vain Mirth and Pleaſures of this World can afford.

5. Bleſſed are the meek: for they ſhall inherit the earth.

5. Nor is it the Men of fierce, haughty, warlike Tempers, that are fit to make Conqueſts in the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom: But a contrary Spirit, namely, a Spirit of Meekneſs and Humility, is abſolutely requiſite for a Subject of that Kingdom. And this will qualify him better to enjoy with Comfort ſuch a Portion of this World, as the Evangelical State requires, than the moſt warlike Courage, and fierceſt Paſſions.

6. Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after † righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled.

6. Nor are ye to fancy that by any unjuſt Right of the Sword, and Conqueſt, the *Meſſiah* and his Followers ſhall invade the Eſtates and Poſſeſſions of other Men. Quite contrary, they abhor every thing that is unjuſt; they will wrong no Man, but are poſſeſſed with a great Love of

† Or Juſtice, δικαιοσυνην.

of Equity and Honeſty. And by their Honeſty, the Subjects of that Kingdom ſhall be ſupplied with ſuch a Competency, that they may live very happy and contented; more happy a great deal than the great Conquerors of the World.

7. Nor ſhall ye need, as in other Conqueſts, to depopulate and deſtroy Countries, and to kill and ſlay all before you. The *Meſſiah* abhors likewiſe all Cruelty; and one of the moſt neceſſary Qualifications for his Kingdom, is Mercy and Compaſſion, and a Tenderneſs to Mankind in Diſtreſs. Men of this Temper ſhall be ſure to meet with Mercy both at the Hands of God and Man, when they want it.

7. *Bleſſed are the merciful: for they ſhall obtain mercy.*

8. Nor are ye to have ſuch groſs carnal Notions of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, as to expect, as in other Conqueſts, that every thing ſhould give way

8. *Bleſſed are the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God.*

way to your Luſt. So far from it, that his Subjects ſhall not only refrain from the groſs Acts of Uncleanneſs, but ſtudy a great inward Purity; and thereby ſhall make great Progreſs in the Knowledge and Love of God; and ſo come to be well acquainted with him, and happy beyond all others in the Enjoyment of him.

9. Bleſſed are the peace-makers: for they ſhall be called the Children of God.

9. Neither are ye to fancy that the *Meſſiah* wants an Army of fierce fighting Men, like the Princes of this World, to ſerve him in his Kingdom. Inſtead of kindling War, he is for making Peace; and inſtead of Soldiers that will fight, he is for ſuch Subjects as are moſt peaceable themſelves, and moſt induſtrious to make Peace among others. Theſe are the Perſons that moſt reſemble God; and in the great Day of Accounts will be honour'd and own'd by him as his genuine Children.

10. Finally; I muſt acquaint you that it is not any worldly Conqueſts the *Meſſiah* or his Followers ſhall make; their Religion is a Religion of the Croſs; they ſhall meet with great and violent Perſecutions from the World, for doing their Duty; and theſe Perſecutions ſhall have excellent Effects upon their Minds, in weaning them from the World, and in teaching them Patience, Reſignation and Submiſſion to the Divine Will; and this will fit them both to become great Examples of Holineſs here, and will prepare them for the heavenly Felicity hereafter. It is by Confeſſors and Martyrs, not by Soldiers and Conquerors, that the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom ſhall be propagated.

10. *Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.*

11. And therefore inſtead of the ſanguine Hopes ye have of great Things in this World, which ye think to attain in my

11. *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and per-*

perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.

my Service, prepare your ſelves for all ſorts of ill Uſage, both of Calumnies and Perſecutions, on my Account; and if ye bear it with Conſtancy and Patience, ye ſhall find it a very happy State.

12. *Rejoyce and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

12. Take Courage therefore and reſolve with all Chearfulneſs and Alacrity to endure this State of Perſecution for the Goſpel. I tell you for your Encouragement, there is an high Degree of Glory in Heaven prepared for you, if ye hold out ſtedfaſtly to the End. Be no way diſmayed at this Uſage from the World; it is no ſtrange thing; ſo perſecuted they the Prophets for doing good. And as ye ſhall have the Honour to imitate them in their Sufferings, ye ſhall alſo partake with them in their high Reward.

13. ¶ *Ye are the Salt of the Earth: but if the*

13. ¶ I think it ſo much the more neceſſary to guard you my *Diſciples* againſt this

corrupt worldly Spirit, and to infuſe into you better Principles; for I deſign not only to make you good Men and Women your ſelves: but, by means of your good Lives and ſound Doctrine, to preſerve and reſcue the reſt of Mankind from all corrupt Principles and vicious Practices. And therefore ye muſt remarkably diſtinguiſh your ſelves from the reſt of the World. *Ye are the Salt*, who are to preſerve others from Corruption. It is abſolutely neceſſary that ye be Men of ſound Principles and exemplary Lives your ſelves. For if notwithſtanding the good Principles I ſhall teach you, they ſhould have no Effect upon you, but ye ſhould be as much carried away with the worldly and carnal Spirit, as other Men are, there is no further Means left to recover you from that Corruption, or to reſtore you to a ſound Temper of Heart and Life. There is no new Diſpenſation whereby

the Salt have loſt his Savour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be troden under foot of men.

by to reclaim thoſe who continue wicked, notwithſtanding the Doctrine of the Goſpel. And therefore corrupt Chriſtians being a Contradiction to their Profeſſion and Inſtitution; like Salt without any Taſte or Savourineſs in it ſelf, when it is to give a good Reliſh to other Things; like ſuch unſavoury Salt, they ſhall be of all Men the moſt contemned and deſpiſed.

14. *Ye are the light of the world. A City that is ſet on an Hill cannot be hid.*

14. *Ye are the Light of the world*; as the Sun diſpels Darkneſs, the Light of your good Example is to enlighten the ignorant and vicious World; therefore do not indulge your ſelves, no not in ſecret Wickedneſs; for the Eyes of all will be upon you; and ye may as well think a City ſeated high on the Top of an Hill will not be ſeen, as that your Life and Actions will not be publickly expoſed and obſerved.

15. And ſo I deſign they ſhould; for Men do not light a Candle to hide it in an obſcure Place, where no body will be the better for the light of it; but they place it in ſome very conſpicuous Station, from whence it may moſt advantagiouſly ſpread its Light to all Comers and Goers. So by gathering Diſciples and ſetting up a Church, my Deſign is, that in their good Lives, the World may have a clear Pattern, what ſort of Perſons they themſelves ought to be; and what an excellent Reformation my Doctrine, if throughly believed and practiſed, will introduce.

15. *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel: but on a candleſtick, and it giveth light to all that are in the houſe.*

16. Take Care therefore to give the World ſo bright Examples of Holineſs and Virtue, that they may obſerve a great Reformation in your Lives, to the Honour of God, who has called you firſt to the Knowledge of the Truth; and has choſen

16. *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.*

chosen by your means to communicate it to others.

17. ¶ *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to* † *fulfil.*

† *Perfect them,* πληρῶσαι.

17. ¶ I know this is very unexpected Doctrine to most of you, that instead of military Discipline, I should insist so much on your exemplary Holiness and Virtue. Ye were in hopes that I would rather ease you of the Burden of the strict Duties of the Moral Law, enjoyned by *Moses* and the Prophets, that ye may, without Controul, carry on the Business of the Conquests and Worldly Kingdom ye are so fond of. Ye expected that I would dispense with the Fifth Commandment, that ye may shake off Obedience to your Superiors; and with the Sixth Commandment, that ye may freely cut off all the *Messiah's* Enemies, or whosoever shall obstruct the setting up of his Kingdom; and with the Seventh Commandment, that as other earthly Conquerors, ye may gratify your Lusts with all

all the beautiful Captives ye can lay your Hands on; and with the Eighth and Tenth Commandments, that without any other Right than that of Conqueſt, ye may invade the Wealth and Poſſeſſions of other Men; and ſo get great Eſtates to your ſelves. But theſe are all groſs Miſtakes, flowing from the wrong Notions of the *Meſſiah*'s worldly Kingdom; which by all means I muſt utterly root out of your Minds. Think not therefore that I will diſpenſe with any of the Duties enjoined in the Moral Law, and explained and preached up by the Prophets. I am ſo far from abrogating thoſe Laws, that I am reſolved to teach them to a greater Degree of Perfection, than either ye, or your chief Doctors the Scribes and Phariſees, or indeed the World, has hitherto underſtood.

18. And

18. *For verily I ſay unto you, till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the Law † till all be fulfilled.*

18. And I give you my Word for it, that I will never abrogate any Part of the moral Law; but that it ſhall remain in full force to the End of the World.

19. *Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Commandments and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven: but whoſoever ſhall do, and teach them, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

19. And therefore if any one profeſſing himſelf a Subject of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, ſhall by his Life and Doctrine deſtroy any one of the Precepts of the Moral Law, and by that Means let in looſe and immoral Principles and Practices into the Church, this ſhall be accounted ſo great a Crime, that in the great Day of Judgment, ſuch a Perſon ſhall be reckoned one of the very worſt of all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity; and as ſuch, ſhall be moſt exemplarily puniſhed. And on the other hand, whoſoever ſhall carefully, both by his Life and Doctrine, pro-

† *Till all things are at an End,* ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται.

promote holy Life and good Morals, he ſhall in the great Day be adjudged to be a moſt excellent Chriſtian, as having employed his Time and Talents to the beſt Advantage.

20. For, let me tell you, I have ſo great a Regard to the Moral Law, that I will not only take Care not to aboliſh it; but will require a much higher Degree of Obedience to it, than the World is aware of. Particularly it is not an outward Compliance with the Letter of it, which is all that is required by your beſt Doctors, the Scribes and Phariſees, that ſhall entitle any one to be a good Chriſtian. I expect of you a great Progreſs in inward Purity and Holineſs, beyond what is required by theſe Doctors of their Diſciples, if ever ye intend to be genuine Members of the Chriſtian Church here, or to be admitted to Heaven hereafter.

20. *For I ſay unto you, that except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

21. ¶ To

21. ¶ *Ye have heard that it was ſaid † by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be ‖ in danger of the judgment.*

† *To them.*

‖ *Liable to* ἔνοχος ἔσαι τῇ κρίσει.

21. ¶ To give you ſome Inſtances of this Truth; that I require higher Degrees of Holineſs and Virtue in my Diſciples, than the Scribes and Phariſees require in theirs: Ye have heard from thoſe Doctors, that *Moſes* gave you a Precept in the Sixth Commandment, only againſt the unjuſt taking away of Mens Lives, in theſe Words, *Thou ſhalt not kill.* And for a Sanction of this Precept, they have told you, that whoſoever tranſgreſſes it ſhall be liable to a Tryal before a Criminal Court, called the *Judgment* or *Aſſizes*, erected in every City; the Puniſhment of which is Death by the Sword; ſo that ye have been taught to look upon this Law againſt Murder, only as a Political Law, the Tranſgreſſion of which, when legally prov'd, incurs a temporary Death.

22. But I muſt give you a much better Information both of the Sins againſt this Commandment, and of the Puniſhments of them before an higher Tribunal in the other World. Know then that this Commandment reaches not only the taking away of your Neighbour's Life, but all Degrees of Hatred of him; whether this Hatred be only inward Malice in the Heart, or break out outwardly in Words and Actions, tho' ſhort of taking away his Life. If it is but inward Malice in the Heart, it ſhall be puniſhed in the other World with a Puniſhment proportionable to the Capital Puniſhment by the Sword here; but if this Hatred breaks out either in contemptuous ſlighting Expreſſions againſt your Neighbour, or in more grievous Provocations of Slander, Contumely, and Reproach, all theſe ſhall in the future State meet with ſtill

22. *But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his brother † without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the Judgment: and whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother,* Raca, *ſhall be in danger of the Council: but whoſoever ſhall ſay,* Thou fool, *ſhall be in danger of Hell fire.*

† *This Word* [εἰκῆ, *without a Cauſe*] *is not in the beſt Copies.*

ſtill higher Degrees of Puniſhment; as ye know Stoning, and Burning alive in the Valley of *Hinnom*, are more ſevere Deaths than Beheading with the Sword.

23. *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee;*

24. *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

23, and 24. Think not that the Offering of Sacrifice ſhall attone for this inward Malice, or theſe outward Provocations. And therefore, if ye expect that your Sacrifices ſhould be acceptable, let a Reconciliation with your offended Neighbour make way for them; that the Duties of Charity and Devotion may not be ſeparated, but may go hand in hand together.

25. *Agree with thine adverſary quickly whiles thou art in the way with him:*

25, and 26. And if ye have wronged any body, ſee that ye make no Delay to make Reparation, and to reconcile your Differences, while ye are as

yet in ſpeaking and converſing Terms with your Adverſary. For as ye know in this World neglecting to pay Debts, and to make up Quarrels in Time, is attended with very bad Conſequences; your Adverſary's Mind growing exaſperated, he ſues you at Law; and puts you to abundance of Trouble and Charge: And if ye are caſt at Law, the Judge commits you to the Cuſtody of the Sheriff, or his Officers; and if ye can't pay the Debt, the Sheriff claps you up in Priſon; and ſo the principal Debt, enflamed with Coſts and Dammages, and the Fees of the Court and Goal, makes your Caſe infinitely more deplorable than it was at firſt; ſo ſhall it be, and much worſe, in the World to come, with Relation to God, the eternal Judge, and his Priſon of Hell, and his Officers the Devils. If ye do not make Reparation of Injuries, and reconcile your Differences in Time, the in-

him: leſt at any time the adverſary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be caſt into priſon.

26. *Verily I ſay unto thee; thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing*

injured Perſon will commit you to God's righteous Judgment; and God will condemn you; and deliver you over to the Devils, to caſt you into Hell Priſon. And by that Time your Caſe will be like that of a miſerable ruined Debtor, clapt up for ſuch an immenſe Sum, that there is no hope it can ever be ſatisfied, or that he can ever be ranſomed out of that diſmal Place.

27. ¶ *Ye have heard that it was ſaid † by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.*

† *To them.*

27. ¶ Another Inſtance wherein the Morals of a good Chriſtian are to excel what is taught by the Scribes and Phariſees, is in their Doctrine concerning the Seventh Commandment; as to which they have taught you, that *Moſes* of old forbad only the groſs Sins of Uncleanneſs.

28. But

28. But this is a very low and imperfect Interpretation of that Commandment. Remember I tell you that luſtful Thoughts, Imaginations, and Deſires, are likewiſe, in the Sight of God, great Tranſgreſſions of that Precept.

29, and 30. For preventing of which, I exhort you carefully to watch all your Senſes, and to avoid all Occaſions of this, or any other Sin. If ye are engaged in any vicious Habit, or in any tempting Company, which is like to enſnare you in the Tranſgreſſion of this, or any other of God's Commandments, ſerve them as you would do a gangrened Member: If they are ever ſo dear, pleaſant, or profitable, by all means part with them. It is better to endure the Pain of Self-denial in renouncing any beloved Luſt, or in abandoning any belo-

28. *But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

29. *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.*

30. *And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt it from thee: for it is profi-*

table

table for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell.

beloved but dangerous Company, than to run the Hazard of deſtroying your ſelves, Soul and Body, in Hell; which will be the Conſequence of indulging any vicious Inclination, or of frequenting bad Company.

31. *It hath been ſaid, whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, let him give her a Writing of Divorcement*

32. *But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, ſaving for the cauſe of fornication, cauſeth her to commit adultery: and whoſoever ſhall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.*

31, and 32. And now that I am guarding you againſt the Sins of Uncleanneſs, and all the Cauſes and Occaſions of them, I muſt caution you likewiſe againſt another Practice of great Affinity with them; I mean the Cuſtom of putting away your Wives by a Bill of Divorce upon every frivolous Occaſion. By this Practice, Men indulge their ſinful Appetites in the frequent Change of their Wives, as if they were ſo many Concubines. For they have been taught by theſe Doctors, that if a Man has a mind to put away his Wife, he has no more to do but to comply with the Formality of the Law,

Law, and take out a publick Writing of Divorce; by which, both Husband and Wife are left to their Liberty of Marrying or not Marrying again, as they think fit. But this is a great Abuſe of the ſacred Inſtitution of Marriage, and opens a great Door to wandering Luſt. For preventing of which, remember what I now ſay: If any Man (with, or without a Bill of Divorce) ſhall put away his Wife, except in Caſe of her Infidelity to the Marriage Bed, that Man is acceſſary to all the Lewdneſs ſhe may be guilty of with other Men in that her abandoned State, and to the Sin of Adultery, if ſhe marries another Husband, while the firſt is alive. And whoſoever marries her, engages and lives in a State of Adultery with her.

33. ¶ Ano-

33. ¶ *Again ye have heard that it hath been ſaid* † *by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thyſelf, but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths*

† *To them.*

33. ¶ Another Inſtance wherein the Chriſtian Morals are to exceed what is taught by the Scribes and Phariſees, is in the matter of Oaths, in which they come far ſhort of the true Intent of the Third Commandment; for they interpret that Commandment to be only a Prohibition of Perjury.

34. *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne:*

35. *Nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool: neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the City of the great King.*

36. *Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black.*

34, 35, and 36. But to rectify this Abuſe, I require you to abſtain not only from all falſe, but likewiſe from all vain, raſh Oaths, if ever ſo true. Particularly I prohibit all cuſtomary Swearing in your common Diſcourſe and Converſation. And do not think to be excuſed if ye invent or uſe Oaths that are not directly by the Name of God himſelf, but (to leſſen the Reverence of an Oath) by other Words, whether of an equivalent Signification or not. For if theſe Oaths have any

Signification of God, tho' they do not directly name him, this is all one and the ſame, as if ye ſwore by God himſelf. Of this ſort is your Swearing *by Heaven*, which is God's Throne; and your Swearing *by the Earth*, which is his Footſtool; and your Swearing *by Jeruſalem*, which is the Place of his Royal Preſence upon Earth. But if the Things ye ſwear by, have no Signification of God, then it is Non-ſenſe and Impiety to ſwear by them, having no Knowledge to diſcern the Truth or Falſhood of what ye ſwear, or Power to avenge it, if ye ſwear falſly. And of this Nature is that common ſenſeleſs Oath, the Swearing *by your Head*, which is an aſſuming of Divine Honour to your ſelves, poor impotent Creatures, that cannot make one Hair white or black. Learn therefore to abſtain from theſe, and all other Oaths, which are ſo uſual in your

your common Diſcourſe and Converſation; for they mightily leſſen the Reverence of an Oath, and bring in a Trickineſs and Diſhoneſty into Mens Words and Actions.

37. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil.

37. But inſtead of theſe, or any other Oaths, let your Speech and Converſation be reduced to a Plainneſs and Simplicity, that Men may depend on your Word without an Oath; for all theſe Aggravations of Speech, that are more than modeſt Significations of the true Senſe of the Mind, proceed from ſome ſiniſter Deſign, and are Temptations to Lying or Perjury; and are uſually deſigned for compaſſing ſome ſinful End or Purpoſe.

38. ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, An Eye for an Eye; and a Tooth for a Tooth.

38. ¶ Another Inſtance wherein your Moral Righteouſneſs muſt exceed that which is taught by the Scribes and Phariſees, is in the Point of Retaliation of Injuries; con-

cerning which ye have been taught by theſe Doctors, that ye may revenge and retaliate Injuries, provided your Revenge keeps within the due Bounds of inflicting the Loſs of an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth; and ſo proportionably in other things, Limb for Limb, and Life for Life.

39, 40, and 41. But if ye intend to be my Diſciples, ye muſt abſtain from every thing that looks like a vindictive Temper. Let the Reparation of Injuries be ſought in a peaceable manner of the publick Magiſtrate, if your offending Neighbour will not agree to make it of himſelf. But I would not have you forward even in this; to call your Neighbour before the Magiſtrate, for every ſmall Affront or Injury. In leſſer Matters, rather venture the receiving a ſecond Injury, than ſue for the Reparation of the firſt.

39. *But I ſay unto you, that ye reſiſt not evil: but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other alſo.*

40. *And if any man will ſue thee at the Law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak alſo.*

41. *And whoſoever ſhall compel thee to go a mile,*

mile, go with him twain.

first. Try that way of gaining an Adverſary, not by retaliating, but by forgiving an Injury.

42. *Give to him* † *that asketh thee, and* * *from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.*

42. But do not even reſt there. If ye would entirely gain your Adverſary, purſue him with further Acts of Kindneſs and Beneficence, *e. g.* If he falls into Decay, and deſires your Charity and Bounty, be ſure to let him have it. Or if he is above that, but wants to borrow of you, or to be aſſiſted in any ſort of good Offices, ſhew no Reſentment or Averſion to him; but ſerve him readily and chearfully in every thing wherein he wants your Aſſiſtance. This is a much more noble Victory, to gain him over to be your Friend, than to overcome him as an Enemy.

† *If he.*

* *If he would borrow, &c.*

43. ¶ *Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou*

43. ¶ And as ye are not to retaliate Injuries, ſo if ye intend to be my Diſciples, ye muſt

muſt not mind that common Maxim, tho' taught by thoſe Doctors; *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy.* For ye muſt by no means cheriſh any Hatred againſt your Enemies.

Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy.

44. But love them ſo far at leaſt as to do all common Neighbourly Duties to them; and likewiſe to obſerve, eſteem, and love their good Qualities; and on account thereof to ſpeak well of them, and to them; and to take all Opportunities to do them good; and heartily to recommend them to God in Prayer, tho' they treat you ever ſo ill in Word and Deed.

44. *But I ſay unto you, Love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you:*

45. In ſo doing, ye ſhall reſemble your heavenly Father, God Almighty, who does good to all, and ſhews many common Favours to Friends and Foes, good and bad; tho' he reſerves his more particular Favours

45. *That ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven, for he maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil*

evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.

Favours for good Men, for whom he has a particular Friendſhip. So ye, tho' ye are to reſerve your particular Friendſhip and brotherly Love for good Men and Women, and to chuſe your Friends among them only; yet as to the Duties of Juſtice, Charity, and Humanity, Prayers, and common Neighbourly Love, ye are to pay them to all Men, even to your worſt Enemies.

46. *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the Publicans the ſame?*

47. *And if ye ſalute your brethren only, what do you more than others? do not even the Publicans ſo?*

46, and 47. By this ye ſhall nobly diſtinguiſh your ſelves from the reſt of the World, who generally content themſelves to expreſs their Charity and Kindneſs, and to ſhew their Civilities to thoſe of their own Sect and Party only. A very low Degree of Goodneſs, which the very Publicans come up to.

48. But

48. But as ye have the Opportunity to be much better inſtructed, and to be furniſhed with more divine Principles, inſtead of following ſuch mean Patterns, who confine their Charity and Beneficence to their own Friends and Party; take Care that in this of Charity, and all the other Parts of Kindneſs to your Neighbour, ye propoſe to your ſelves the Pattern of Almighty God, in a more univerſal Beneficence; and that ye come as near it, as your imperfect State and Circumſtances in this World will admit.

48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.*

Chap.

Chap. VI.

V. 1. *Take heed that ye do not your* † Alms *before men to be ſeen of them: otherwiſe ye have no reward of your father which is in heaven.*

† *Righteouſneſs,* Δικαιοσύνην.

VERSE 1. But it is not only in their Miſ-interpretations of the Law, that the Morals ye have learnt of the Scribes and Phariſees are to be rectified; there are many other things, for which they pretend no Countenance from the Law, in which your Righteouſneſs muſt exceed theirs.

Particularly they are apt to marr all good Duties with Hypocriſy, by mixing in their low carnal Ends and Deſigns with them, ſuch as Vanity and Oſtentation, and the Affectation of Praiſe and Applauſe from Men, or Profit and Advantage to themſelves. Inſtead of which, ye my Diſciples are to do all your good Actions with a ſingle Eye to God, and not from any inferiour mean Deſign of Praiſe or Profit from the World. O-

therwiſe, aſſure your ſelves, your Reward for ſuch good Actions as are not done with an Eye to God, but from worldly Views and Deſigns, ſhall be all in this World; ye may perhaps meet with the Praiſe or Profit ye aimed at; but have no further to expect from them in Heaven. For God will not beſtow thoſe great heavenly Rewards on any thing but what is done purely out of Reſpect to his Precepts, and deſigned for his Service. More particularly ye are to mind this Rule in the moſt commended Duties of private *Alms-giving*, *Prayer*, and *Faſting*; in all which the Scribes and Phariſees are too much led away with the Purſuit of Vain-glory, and breed their Diſciples to the Imitation of the ſame Spirit.

2. To

2. *Therefore when thou doeſt thine Alms, do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the ſynagogues, and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their reward.*

2. To begin with *Alms-giving*, do not make a Noiſe with it, by your ſelves or others trumpeting out your good Deeds; as Hypocrites chuſe to make their good Works as publick as they can, on purpoſe to procure the Praiſe and Applauſe of Men, and other worldly Ends conſequent thereon. I can aſſure you, they are to expect no Reward in Heaven for ſuch ſort of Alms.

3. *But when thou doeſt alms, let not thy left-hand know what thy right hand doth:*

4. *That thine alms may be in ſecret: and thy father which ſeeth in ſecret, himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.*

3, and 4. But ye my Diſciples, when ye do *Alms*, go about it in the ſecreteſt modeſteſt Manner: And your heavenly Father, who ſees and obſerves that you have only an Eye to him in it, will reward you openly in the great Day of Judgment.

5. ¶ In *Prayer* likewiſe, do not imitate thoſe Hypocrites, who chuſe to pray in the moſt publick Places, and with a Deſign to be taken Notice of, and admired, or truſted and preferred by the World, as Men of great Piety and Devotion. This, I aſſure you, is the only Reward they are to expect.

5. ¶ *And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray ſtanding in the ſynagogues, and in the corners of ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men. Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward.*

6. Inſtead of this Vain-glory and Oſtentation, do ye contrive to perform your ſecret Devotions as quietly as poſſibly ye can, retired from Company and Buſineſs: And God, who is never excluded from the moſt ſecret Place, ſhall publickly reward you before Men and Angels, in the Judgment of the great Day.

6. *But thou when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy father which is in ſecret, and thy father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.*

7. Another

7. But when ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do: for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking.

7. Another Thing in their Prayers, which Hypocrites value themſelves upon, is the great Length of them, and the ſeeming Zeal of their frequent Repetitions; a Cuſtom the Heathen likewiſe follow, as believing their Gods are to be prevailed upon by Clamour and Dunning.

8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

8. But do not ye imitate them in this; for it is neither to inform nor to perſwade God, that Prayers are deſigned; for he knows all your Wants before ye ask him. And therefore your Prayers ſhould be contrived in a way moſt ſuitable to his Honour, and your Good.

9. After this manner therefore pray ye. Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

9. And that ye may know the better in what manner this Duty of Prayer is to be performed; let it be in ſome general, ſhort, ſubmiſſive and important Petitions, like theſe following. O Father of Angels

gels and Men, who art both able and ready to help and relieve thy poor Creatures, the firſt Thing we deſire of thee is, that all Things may be contrived for thy Honour and Glory; and that we and all thy Servants may be directed to the beſt Methods for promoting it; and that all our other Petitions may be regulated and limited by it.

10. Next we pray that the Goſpel may be propagated all the World over; and that the good Effects of it may appear in the Obedience and holy Lives of the Profeſſors of it, which we deſire may be daily improving to higher Degrees of Perfection; that it may come as near as is poſſible for humane Infirmity, to the Ready, Chearful Obedience of the Angels in Heaven.

10. *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*

11. Fur-

11. *Give us this day our daily bread.*

11. Further we beſeech thee in thy good Providence to ſupply us with ſuch a Competency of worldly Neceſſaries, as thou knoweſt will beſt ſuit our preſent Condition and Circumſtances.

12. *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debters.*

12. And forgive us our Sins, as we forgive thoſe who have injured us.

13. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

13. And keep us out of the way of Temptation to Sin; and when we are under the Power of it, deliver us from the Sin to which we are then tempted, and from all other Snares of the Devil. We are encouraged to put up theſe Petitions to thy holy Majeſty; for thou art our King, we thy Subjects; we are weak Creatures, but thou art Omnipotent; and all theſe Petitions, as they make for our Benefit, ſo they aim at thy

thy Honour and Glory, in which we deſire all our Prayers may terminate for ever and ever. So be it.

14. It is not in vain that to the Petition for Pardon of Sin, I teach you to add this Limitation, As ye forgive them that injure you; for this is a ſettled Rule that God has ſet, and moſt neceſſary for you to remember, even in your Prayers and Devotions, that if ye are of a merciful forgiving Temper, God will forgive you.

14. *For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes your heavenly father will alſo forgive you.*

15. But if ye are hard-hearted and revengeful, ye are by no means to expect Mercy and Forgiveneſs at his Hands.

15. *But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your father forgive your treſpaſſes.*

16. ¶ And now the ſame Caution I have given you againſt Oſtentation and Vainglory, in the Duties of *Almsgiving*

16. ¶ *Moreover when ye faſt, be not as the hypocrites, of*

of a ſad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward.

giving and *Prayer*, ye are to obſerve likewiſe in the Duty of *Faſting*. Do not put on a demure ſad Look, as the Hypocrites do, when they faſt, that they may be taken Notice of by Men, and receive the Applauſe of mortified Perſons. This is what they aim at; and it is all the Reward they ſhall have.

17. *But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy face.*

17. But ye, my Diſciples, when ye faſt, appear in your uſual, cleanly and gay Garb and Dreſs.

18. *That thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy father which is in ſecret: and thy father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.*

18. Like Men who aim not at the ſetting off their Devotion and Mortification to the World, but are content with the Eye and Approbation of Almighty God; who will openly reward in the Day of Judgment, the good Things which he beholds thus ſincerely done in ſecret.

19. ¶ Another part of the Phariſaical Spirit I muſt caution you againſt, is that of their *Covetouſneſs* and *Anxiety* as to the World. Strive not ſo much to lay up Treaſures of earthly Things; to have Wardrobes full of rich Clothes and Furniture; Granaries well repleniſhed with all ſorts of Grain; and Cheſts and Cabinets well ſtored with Money and Jewels; all which are ſubject to diverſe Accidents of Moths, Weavels, and Thieves.

19. ¶ *Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal.*

20. But endeavour, by employing your Wealth in good and charitable Works, to tranſmit your Effects to Heaven; and ſo to lay up your Treaſures there, where they will remain ſafe and ſecure to your Uſe, againſt all Dangers and Caſualties whatſoever.

20. *But lay up for your ſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal.*

21. This

21. *For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.*

21. This will be a certain Means to cure you of worldly Mindedneſs, and to ſet your Affections on Heaven: For where-ever your chief Treaſure is, your Affections will be there alſo.

22. *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light.*

23. *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs!*

22, and 23. And this is no ſmall Advantage; for worldly Mindedneſs (as indeed all other ſtrong vicious Inclinations) caſts ſuch a Miſt before the internal Light of the Mind and Conſcience, that it can't diſcern Truth from Falſhood, or Right from Wrong; and this expoſes a Man to innumerable wrong Steps in his Life and Converſation; as a dark Eye blinded with Rheum expoſes a Man, who truſts to it without a better Guide, to many Dangers in his walking; whereas a Mind ſet on Heaven is a good Director in all your Actions, like a good Eye, which gives a clear Direction to the Body in all its Motions.

24. Beſides, this worldly Mindedneſs is utterly inconſiſtent with Religion and the Fear of God. For God and the World are like two Maſters of contrary Tempers and Diſpoſitions, whoſe Commands do generally interfere. No Man can ſerve them both; for either he will inwardly love and outwardly obey the firſt, and hate and diſobey the ſecond; or elſe he will love and obey the ſecond, and hate and diſregard the firſt.

24. *No man can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.*

25. The Service of the World then being ſo dangerous, beware that under Pretence of a lawful Care about the Neceſſaries of Life, Meat, Drink, and Clothing, ye do not run into an exceſſive Anxiety and Solicitude about theſe Things. Learn to truſt Providence; for certainly God who gave you your Lives, and made your Bodies ſubject to ſo many Neceſſities, and for-

25. *Therefore I ſay unto you,* † *take no thought for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet for your body what ye ſhall put*

† *Be not anxious,* μὴ μεριμνᾶτε.

ut on: is not he life more han meat, and he body than raiment?

forbids your own anxious Care about theſe very Neceſſities, (much more about the Superfluities of Life) will take care to ſupply you with thoſe Neceſſaries upon your regular moderate Care, and without any exceſſive Anxiety and Solicitude.

26. *Behold he fowls of the air: for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

26. To encourage you to this Duty, behold thoſe merry Creatures the Birds and Fowls of the Air, who can't do near ſo much toward their own Subſiſtence as ye can; for they can neither ſow nor reap, nor lay up in Granaries; all which ye can and may do; yet they are taken care of, and fed by God's Providence. Have not ye much the better of them? And do not ye believe that God counts you more deſerving of his Care?

27. And

27. And indeed what ſignifies all this exceſſive Care, but to ſhorten your Days, and to make your Lives uneaſy; for ye can neither prolong Life, nor the healthy vigorous part of it, by all your Anxiety; but Prejudice both.

27. *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his † Stature?*

† *Age or Youth,* τὴν ἡλικίαν.

28. Neither need ye be more anxious for Cloaths than for Victuals; the ſame Providence extending to both. For conſider the wild Lilies and Tulips, how prettily they grow, without any of their own Care and Anxiety. They neither undergo the Field Labour nor the Houſe Labour, which ye are capable of, towards providing your own Clothing;

28. *And why take ye thought for raiment? Conſider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin.*

29. And yet are clothed much finer than the greateſt Princes, with all the Encouragements they can give to the skilfulleſt Artiſts.

29. *And yet I ſay unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe.*

30. And

30. *Wherefore if God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the* * *oven, ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

* *Or Still,* κλίβανον.

30. And if God's Providence extends it ſelf to ſuch ſhort-liv'd worthleſs Creatures as the Herbs and Flowers, which look gay to Day, and to Morrow are caſt into the Still; ſhall he not much more clothe you by means of your own moderate regular Care and Induſtry, the Uſe of which ye are allowed; and without an exceſſive diſtruſtful Anxiety, which he has forbid you.

31. *Therefore take no thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat? or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed?*

31. To conclude then this Argument againſt worldly Mindedneſs and Anxiety, lay aſide all theſe diſtruſtful Thoughts about Meat, Drink and Clothing.

32. (*For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek*) *for*

32. Such exceſſive Care about theſe Things is more excuſable in Heathens, who are Strangers to God's Providence.

dence. Your heavenly Father will not forget you; he knows ye have need of all theſe Things, and will provide them for you, upon your moderate and regular Care, which he allows; and without your anxious exceſſive Care, which he has prohibited.

for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things.

33. But let your great and chief Care be to get to Heaven, by having a deep Senſe of Religion, and by promoting the Practice of it in your ſelves and others; a Study which will turn to the beſt Account; for ye ſhall thereby both ſecure your eternal Happineſs, and all worldly Things, as far as they are neceſſary or good for you, ſhall be thrown in to the Bargain.

33. *But ſeek ye firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you.*

34. And as ye are not to extend your Care to the Superfluities, but to limit it (and without Anxiety too) to the Neceſſaries of Life; ſo neither are ye to ſtretch your Care about

34. *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow ſhall take thought for*

the things of it ſelf: ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

about theſe Neceſſaries to any long Time to come: for the future, when it comes, will be more proper to provide for its own Occaſions, and Circumſtances. And the Troubles and Care of your preſent Circumſtances, are ſufficient for the preſent Time. So that ye neither need nor ought to anticipate the Cares of the future.

Chap. VII.

1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

VERSE 1. There is one Branch more of the Phariſaical Spirit, againſt which it is neceſſary that ye be cautioned; namely, Cenſoriouſneſs and raſh judging; a Sin which is commonly puniſhed in the ſame kind upon the raſh Cenſurer, both in this World, and in that which is to come.

2. For it is ſo juſtly contrived by God, that according to the Degrees of Charitableneſs or Cenſoriouſneſs, with which ye treat your Neighbour; ſo God will treat you mercifully or ſeverely, both in the Diſpenſations of his Providence in this World, and in his final Retributions in the World to come. And the World likewiſe never fails to be revenged of the unjuſt Cenſurer in his own Way, by detecting the Falſhood of his Calumnies, and retaliating upon him, by expoſing his other Vices.

2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged: and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.

3. Conſider likewiſe how highly indecent and improper it is, for a Man who overlooks his own great Vices, to be ſo ſharp-ſighted and cenſorious as to his Neighbour's ſmaller Faults.

3. And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4. And

4. Or how wilt thou ſay to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

4. And how unqualified ſuch a Perſon is for the Office of Cenſuring, who can neither ſee his own Faults, nor decently blame them in others, while he is guilty of the ſame, or greater himſelf?

5. Thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

5. There muſt certainly be a great deal of Pride and Hypocriſy lurking under this Temper; for by offering to cenſure your Neighbour's ſmall Faults, ye would make the World believe that ye are Perſons of very blameleſs Lives your ſelves. Beware of this Hypocriſy, and let your Cenſoriouſneſs begin at Home; firſt cenſure and amend your own Faults; and then ye will be much better qualified to diſcharge the Duty of fraternal Correption to others.

6. Only in the Diſcharge of this Duty, ye muſt take Care not to obtrude your Admonitions and Reprehenſions upon Perſons of fierce, implacable Tempers, who, inſtead of being the better for them, will avenge themſelves upon you, and do you all the Miſchief lies in their Power; nor upon Perſons of incorrigible, profligate, looſe Lives; for they will only profanely and Atheiſtically ridicule your good Admonitions, and expoſe you for adminiſtring them.

6. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.

I ſhall conclude this Diſcourſe of Chriſtian Duties with Two *general Precepts; but ſo comprehenſive ones, that they will ſerve for a compleat Compendium of the whole Moral Law, and likewiſe very much facilitate the Obſervation of it.*

7, 8, 9, 10, *and* 11. ¶ The *Firſt* relates to your Duty to God, whom with Love and Com-

7. ¶ *Ask, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and*

nd ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.

8. *For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.*

9. *Or what man is there of you, when if his ſon ask bread, will give him a ſtone?*

10. *Or if he ask a fiſh, will give him a ſerpent?*

11. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven*

Complacence ye are to look upon as a kind and loving, not as a hard-hearted, moroſe Father, able and ready to help you to all good Things ye apply to him for; and therefore let me exhort you earneſtly to be very diligent, aſſiduous and importunate in all the Duties of Devotion, more eſpecially in begging the Grace and Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit, to enable you to do your Duty. And for your Encouragement, I do aſſure you, that God will never deny the importunate Suitor the good Things he wants, and which he knows to be needful for him. Even an Earthly Father, tho' otherwiſe ever ſo ill natured, can't have the Heart to deny his own Children Neceſſaries; or inſtead of good Things, to give them what he knows will hurt them. Far leſs will God deſpiſe or elude the Prayers of his Children. For tho'

tho' he will have you, like dutiful Children, addreſs him for what ye want, he is more ready to grant you good Things, than ye are to ask them; and there is nothing he is better pleas'd with, than to have you depend upon him, as loving Children on a kind Father, and to come frequently to him with your Petitions and Thankſgivings. This is an Employment which will turn to the beſt Account, in helping you to a right Senſe of your Duty; in furniſhing you with Grace to obſerve it; and in procuring you Pardon after Tranſgreſſion, upon the penitent Confeſſion of your Sins, and ſincere Reſolutions and Endeavours of Amendment.

ven give good things to them that ask him?

12. Now this Love of God to you all as his Children, ſhould induce you not only to love him again, (to be expreſſed

12. *Therefore all things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even*

even ſo to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets.

preſſed in your frequent Addreſſes to him) but alſo to love one another like Brethren. And this Love will facilitate all the Duties you owe to your Neighbour: Which leads me to the *Second* General Precept, with which I conclude this Compendium of Moral Duties; namely, That in all Points of Duty ye are to treat your Neighbour after the ſame Manner as ye would think reaſonable to be treated by him, if ye were in his Circumſtances, and he in yours. This Love of your Neighbour, flowing thus from the Love of God, and cloſely connected with it, is ſo comprehenſive a Duty, that it anſwers all the particular Precepts of the Moral Law, with all the Explications and Enlargements of the Prophets.

I have now taught you a very compleat Rule of Duty; but I foreſee ye will be under great Temptations to neglect and abandon it: and therefore before I

aiſ-

diſmiſs you, I will lay before you ſome of the chief ſnares ye will be endangered by, which will be apt to ſeduce you from this ſtrict Way of Duty I have been teaching you; and will endeavour likewiſe to fortify you againſt them. There are chiefly three Sorts of Snares, that will be apt to ſeduce you from your Duty.

13, *and* 14. ¶ I. The *Firſt* is, that the Way of Duty, as I have deſcribed it, is really difficult, and but very little frequented by the Generality of Mankind; on the other Hand, the Way of Vice is eaſy and enticing; both your own corrupt Inclinations, and the Current of Examples, will be apt to hurry you into it, except ye are fore-armed with a great deal of Caution and Reſolution. Herein then ye are to employ your greateſt Vigilance, and to exert your utmoſt Endeavours, to keep in the ſtrict Way of Duty, which I have taught you;

13. ¶ *Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*

14. *Becauſe ſtrait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it.*

you; tho' both your own carnal Inclinations, and the Multitude of Examples, and the Authority and Prevalency of Cuſtom, and the Faſhions of the World, ſhould tempt you to deſert it. Conſider ſeriouſly with your ſelves, that how great ſoever the Temptations to a ſinful Courſe may be at preſent, they will certainly end in your everlaſting Ruin; and on the other hand, that the ſtrict Way of Duty, however difficult, unpleaſant, and unfrequented it may be at preſent, will infallibly lead you to eternal Happineſs, which will richly anſwer your greateſt Pains and Endeavours.

15. ¶ *Beware of falſe prophets, which come to you in ſheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

15. ¶ II. A *Second* dangerous Temptation, by which ye will be apt to be enſnared, is ſuch bad Doctrine as undermines Chriſtian Practice; againſt which ye muſt be very much upon your Guard. For many Deluded, but perhaps Zealous and pious Teachers, will ſtart

up, whoſe dangerous Doctrine, if ye ſuck it in, before ye are aware of it, will overthrow both your good Principles and Practices.

16, 17, 18, 19, *and* 20. Ye are to be very Cautious of that Sort of Teachers, who are fitted out by the Devil not to ſeduce you by their looſe Examples, like thoſe I juſt now deſcribed, but under a great Shew of Piety. The beſt Way to know them, is not ſo much to mind their great Appearances of Piety and Devotion, which all Hereticks generally put on; as the Fruits and Conſequences they and their Doctrine are apt to produce in the World. If the Doctrine they teach undermines any of the great Duties of Morality, either Directly, or in its Conſequences, then ye may be ſure that it is a falſe Doctrine. But if the natural Tendency of it is to promote Holineſs and good

16. *Ye ſha know them b their fruits: a men gather grapes of thorn or figs of thiſtles?*

17. *Even ſ every good tre bringeth forth good fruit: bu a corrupt tre bringeth forth evil fruit.*

18. *A goo tree cannot brin forth evil fruit neither can a corrupt tree bring forth goo fruit.*

19. *Every tree that bring eth not forth good fruit, is hewen down an ca*

caſt into the fire.
20. *Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know them.*

good Life, ye may be ſure it is a good Doctrine. And as this is a ſure Mark, it is likewiſe well fitted to the meaneſt Capacities. For it is not every one that can anſwer the Objections againſt Good, or the Arguments for Bad Doctrines; but it is no hard Matter in Time, even for an unlearned Man to obſerve the good or bad Effects which any Doctrine has in the World. As Fruit Trees and Vines are not ſo eaſily diſcerned whether they be good or bad from the Sight of the Bark and Leaves, as from the Goodneſs or Badneſs of their Fruit. This is the chief Mark by which ye are to judge of all Doctrines: If they have a plain Tendency to make Men ſincerely good, by putting them upon the Practice of thoſe Duties I have been recommending, they are good Doctrines. But if they have a Tendency, either directly to Impiety or Immorality, or in-

directly, by taking away any of the chief Motives, Helps, and Means of Duty, then they are bad and dangerous Doctrines; and ye are to be upon your Guard againſt them, as pernicious, ſoul-deſtroying Errors.

21, 22, *and* 23. ¶ III. A *Third* dangerous Temptation, whereby a great many will be ſeduced out of the Way of Duty, into the Way of Sin and Vice, will be by placing their Hopes of Salvation on other ſhining Qualities, that will ſignify nothing if ſeparated from true Holineſs and Virtue: Such as, a Zealous high Profeſſion, great Gifts and Talents of Learning and Elocution, High Places and Preferments in the Church, and a vaſt Name and Eſteem among Men; all which will prove broken Reeds, if ſeparated from Holineſs and good Life. For after all, it is not the moſt confident Faith, nor the

21. ¶ *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

22. *Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

23. *And then will*

will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.

the greateſt Profeſſion, nor the being Maſters of the greateſt Learning, Knowledge, and Eloquence, nor the being entruſted with many Gifts and Talents, nor the being ever ſo zealous againſt Hereſies and Hereticks, nor the obtaining a mighty Name in the Church, nor the being employed in the higheſt Truſts and Offices of it, nor any other ever ſo much admired and ſhining Qualities, without a ſincere Obedience to the Laws of the Goſpel, that ſhall be accepted in the great Day of Accounts. All theſe indeed will be truſted to, and pleaded; but without ſuch ſincere Obedience, they ſhall every one of them be rejected; and the Perſons that plead them ſhall have no Share or Intereſt in me, nor Protection from me; but ſhall be appointed their Portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers.

24, *and* 25.

24, *and* 25. ¶ To conclude then, all depends upon your learning, and ſincerely putting in Practice theſe Principles and Duties of Religion and good Life, which I have taught you; for if ye live up to theſe Precepts, ye ſhall acquire ſuch a Firmneſs of Mind, and be ſo well ſettled in your Principles, that no Temptations, Trials, or Perſecutions whatſoever, ſhall be able to ſeduce you to Apoſtacy in your Profeſſion, or to a Relapſe into a ſinful Courſe of Life. Your Religion will be like a ſtrong Houſe built on a ſolid Foundation, which no Storms or Inundations can hurt.

24. ¶ *There-*
fore whoſoever
heareth theſe ſay-
ings of mine,
and doth them,
I will liken him
unto a wiſe man,
which built his
houſe upon a
rock:

25. *And the*
rain deſcended,
and the floods
came, and the
winds blew, and
beat upon that
houſe: and it
fell not, for it
was founded up-
on a rock.

26, *and* 27. But on the other hand, if ye reſt upon a bare Knowledge and Profeſſion of my Doctrine, and rely on the Soundneſs of your Opinions, without an hearty, reſolute, applying of your ſelves to the Study and Obedience of my

26. *And e-*
very one that
heareth theſe
ſayings of mine,
and doth them
not, ſhall be
likened unto a
fooliſh man,
which

which built his house upon the sand:

27. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

my Precepts, ye will lose all your Labour, like a Man that builds a sightly House upon a bad Foundation: and in the Day of Trial and Temptation ye will be overcome, and be in Danger of falling away into a total and final Course of Sin and Apostacy.

28. And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.

29. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

28, *and* 29. When this Divine Sermon was ended, the People, who had very attentively heard it, were strangely struck and wrought upon, both with the Excellency of the Doctrine, and its Suitableness to their Circumstances, and the mighty Authority and Energy of the Speaker, and the wonderful Grace and Blessing of God, which carried Home these great Truths to the Hearts of most of the Auditory: For all these Things

Things were quite new, and not to be met with in the ſuperficial Comments and Traditions of the *Jewiſh* Rabbies, their ordinary Teachers.

The End of the Paraphraſe.

SERMON I.

MAT. V. 1.

And † seeing the Multitudes, *he went up into a Mountain; and when he was ſet, his Diſciples came unto him.*

V. 2. *And he opened his Mouth, and taught them, ſaying,*

The firſt Sermon on this Text.

AS I would not, with ſome Writers on this Divine Sermon, paſs by theſe Words as ſuperfluous, ſo I could not prevail with my ſelf to entertain you with ſeveral Obſervations, which I am apt to think, chiefly for Want of better Matter, ſome

† Or looking upon. See *Mar.* 8. 33.

other Commentators have made, and inſiſted on from them; one of which is, that as the Law of *Moſes* was given on a Mountain, ſo Chriſt that he might reſemble *Moſes*, thought fit to deliver his Goſpel from the Mount; as if our Lord had confined his Preaching to this Mountain, and had not at other Times taught Goſpel Duties in other Places; namely in their Cities, Villages, Synagogues, the Temple, on the Plain, out of *Peter's* Ship, and in ſhort every where, as Opportunity preſented. And indeed his going up into the Mountain here, ſeems from the Text it ſelf to have been occaſioned by the Multitudes, for the Conveniency of Eaſe from the Crowd, and that he might be the better heard and underſtood by this great Company of Auditors; it being natural upon ſuch Occaſions for any Man who is to ſpeak to a Multitude, to take the Advantage of an higher Station; that his Voice may be the better heard, and his Perſon ſeen, which has no ſmall Influence on the Authority and Freedom of Elocution, ſo neceſſary in all Orators, and ſo particularly noted in our Saviour in the End of this Sermon, (a) *that he taught with Authority, and not as the Scribes*; for I am not for making Myſteries, where the Holy Writers are ſilent about them. Nor do I apprehend any further Myſtery in the Poſture of *Sitting*

(a) Mat. 7. 29.

that

than that it might be either for his Eaſe after a Journey; for his travelling through all (*a*) *Galilee*, and the Peoples following him from all Parts of the Country are taken Notice of in the Context; or elſe that it was in Compliance with the Cuſtom of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, who uſually ſat, when they taught in their Schools and Synagogues. Nor do I lay any great Streſs on the Phraſe of *opening his Mouth*, and teaching, for this was a common Phraſe among the *Jews*, for a deliberate breaking of Silence, and offering to make a Speech. Far leſs would I obſerve, as I find ſome do, that our Saviour called his twelve Apoſtles up to him from the Crowd, and gave them theſe Leſſons and Inſtructions apart; for this I take to be an Obſervation of no good Importance, and likewiſe directly contrary to ſome Paſſages in the Hiſtory it ſelf, which tells us that in this Sermon (*b*) *he taught the People*; and St. *Luke* thought this ſo material an Obſervation, as to the Doctrine of the Sermon, which he likewiſe gives us an Account of; that he has left it upon Record, that we might not miſtake in a Thing of this Conſequence; that he finiſhed all theſe Sayings (*c*) *in the Audience of the People.*

But inſtead of theſe, and ſome other Obſervations, which I doubt are either falſe, or frivolous;

(*a*) Mat. 4. 23, 24, 25. (*b*) Mat. 7. 29. (*c*) Luke 7. 1.

at leaſt have no Ground from this Text; I ſhall chooſe to entertain you with two very material Inquiries, which though commonly overlooked by the practical Writers on this Sermon, I judge may be of ſingular Uſe, to help us to the true Senſe and Meaning of it; and notwithſtanding this their Silence, are both very directly pointed at in the Words; nay ſeem to me to be the principal Scope and Deſign of them.

I. The firſt Inquiry ſhall be concerning the immediate Occaſion of the Sermon from theſe firſt Words. *And ſeeing the Multitudes.*

II. The next ſhall be concerning the proper Auditors of it, called here our Saviour's *Diſciples*; whether by them we are to underſtand only the twelve Apoſtles, or all Chriſtians?

I. *Firſt* then, let us conſider the immediate Occaſion of this Sermon, from theſe firſt Words *And ſeeing the Multitudes:* This naturally leading us to inquire what our Saviour now ſaw in theſe Multitudes, to induce him to make ſuch a Diſcourſe to them at this Time. For this *Seeing*, as I take it, was not only a beholding with the Eyes of the Body, but a conſidering with the Eye of the Mind. And this the *Greek* Lexicographers take Notice of, that the Word ἰδὼν tranſlated *Seeing* is often uſed

in

in that Senſe; (*a*) and ſeveral Inſtances of it may be found in the *New Teſtament*. (*b*) We ſhall the better ſatisfy our ſelves in this Inquiry, by looking back a little into the Context, and conſidering what is there obſerved of the Circumſtances of theſe Multitudes, at the time of this Sermon; which in ſhort was, as we are told at the three laſt Verſes of the foregoing Chapter: (*c*) That our Saviour had now travelled all over *Galilee*, and had made himſelf remarkable for two Things, which took mightily with the People.

One was the new Doctrine he publickly preached, and made no Secret of it, which was the good News that the *Meſſiah* was now to enter upon his Kingdom. It is true in our Tranſlation this is a little obſcure; for we ſay only that *Jeſus went about all* Galilee, *teaching in their Synagogues, and Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom*, Mat. iv. 23. But in the Original it is Κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας; which literally rendered is *proclaiming the good News of the Kingdom*, *THE Kingdom*; for ſo by way of Excellency they called the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*. This good News was what they longed for, and at this Time were big with the Expectation of it; nothing could be wel-

(*a*) *Transfertur* ἰδεῖν *& ad mentis Oculos, ut et videre pro intelligere, animadvertere*; Scap. *in* Voce εἶδω. (*b*) Mat. 9. 2, Act 14. 9. Mark 12. 28. Luke 9. 47. Mark 8. 33. (*c*) Mat. 4. 23, 24, 25.

comer

comer to them, or more greedily received, than this News from our Saviour, and his confirming it with Miracles, as it immediately follows that he did. This is the firſt Thing then I deſire may be taken Notice of, and remember'd, concerning the Circumſtances of the Multitudes at this Time; that they greedily entertained this good News, that the *Meſſiah* was now about to ſet up his Kingdom.

The other Thing, which cauſed our Saviour to be ſo much followed at this Time, was a greater Secret; for it was a Doctrine the Rulers of that Church could not bear to be ſpoke of; tho' it was not only privately Whiſper'd, but publickly ſpread and believed among the People, that this ſame *Jeſus* was the *Meſſiah*; and that tho' he appeared at preſent in low Circumſtances, he would after he had tried the Affections and Inclinations of the People, take upon him a very different Character, and Act openly as the *Meſſiah:* Now that they had generally this Opinion of him, eſpecially they who became his Diſciples, will appear to any one who conſiders the following particulars.

1. That he had been very plainly deſcribed by *John* the *Baptiſt*, not only in general Terms; (a) *that there was one among them, whoſe ſhoe-latchet he was not worthy to unlooſe:* Tho' even this had a

(a) John 1. 26, 27.

great

great meaning, conſidering that there was no other, the People had an Eye to at that time, but either *Jeſus* or himſelf; and that he himſelf poſitively diſowned His being the *Meſſiah*, and declared himſelf only his Harbinger or Forerunner. But afterwards *John* was much more poſitive and particular in this matter: For pointing *Jeſus* out he ſaid, (*a*) *Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World.*

2. Our Saviour's Doctrine was attended with ſuch a Divine power, Force, and Authority; that the People began all to ſuſpect ſomething extraordinary of him. For they obſerved that (*b*) *never Man ſpake like him*: And that (*c*) *he taught them with authority and not as the Scribes.*

3. The extraordinary power of Miracles, which attended him, made them think he was that greater Perſon *John Baptiſt* deſcribed. (*d*) *John did no Miracle*, ſay they; *but all things John ſpake of this Man were true.* His Miracles were ſo great and many, and ſo very Beneficial, that as they procured him the great following of the People, ſo they often extorted from them Confeſſions that he was the *Meſſiah*. Thus we find the Woman of *Samaria* tells her fellow Citizens. (*e*) *Come ſee a Man which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Chriſt?* And ſo the People when they ſaw the Miracle of the Loaves ſaid one to another: (*f*) *This is of a truth that*

(*a*) John 1. 29. (*b*) John 7. 46. (*c*) Mat. 7. 29. (*d*) John 10. 41. (*e*) John 4. 29. (*f*) John 6. 14.

Prophet that ſhould come into the World; and they not only talked thus, but had a Deſign upon it *to take him by Force and make him a King*, if he had not ſuddenly withdrawn himſelf from them. This notion they had very currant among them; and they were ever and anon coming out with it. Thus the Mother of *Zebedees* Children petitioned in behalf of her two Sons, (*a*) *that they might ſit, one on his right Hand, and the other on his left, in his Kingdom*: And it was the conſtant diſpute among his Diſciples, *which of them ſhould be greateſt in his Kingdom*. The People after the Reſurrection of *Lazarus* huzza'd him into *Jeruſalem* as the *Meſſiah*: (*b*) *Hoſannah to the Son of David and bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.* (*c*) This was the good Confeſſion he made before *Pontius Pilate*; and it was ſo currant a Notion, that the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* accuſed him of it before that Governor, (*d*) *that he made himſelf a King*; and this was the very thing he was condemned for; as appears by the Accuſation written upon his Croſs, (*e*) *This is Jeſus the King of the Jews.* And this was the great Diſappointment of his Diſciples, upon his Death: *We truſted ſaid they, that it had been he, which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*, or *have ſet Iſrael free.* Luke, xxiv. 21. as they expreſs it plainly after his Reſurrection, when they were at him with the ſame thing ſtill. Acts, i. 6.

(*a*) Mat. 20. 20. (*b*) Mat. 21. 9. (*c*) John 18. 37. (*d*) Luke 23. 2. (*e*) Mat. 27. 37.

Lord

Lord wilt thou at this time reſtore again the Kingdom to Iſrael? So that it is moſt probable, that a great part of this Multitude, which flocked after *Jeſus* from all parts of the Country, believed he was the *Meſſiah*: and would in a little time take upon him that Character.

Let us now lay theſe Things together, that we may the better gather the Circumſtances of theſe Multitudes, when our Saviour made this Sermon to them. They all in general expected ſome great Prince, whom they called their *Meſſiah*; they all greedily embraced our Saviours good news that *the Kingdom of the Meſſiah*, called in Scripture *the Kingdom of Heaven*, was now at Hand. The greateſt part of them, eſpecially of thoſe who are called here *his Diſciples*, believed that he was the Perſon: And they had ſuch an Ardour to follow him, that they left Houſe and Home; and betook themſelves to his Attendance, being every one big with Expectations from him, that they ſhould make their Fortunes in his Service. This being then the State and Condition of the People at this time; it is very natural to conſider what Subject was moſt proper for our Saviour to entertain them with.

This Queſtion leads me to the laſt thing I obſerve in their Circumſtances; which is, that tho' they expected the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; and had an extraordinary Opinion of *Jeſus* as the Perſon; and ſpread his Fame; and flocked after him

him in great Numbers: They had nevertheleſs exceeding groſs carnal Notions of this his Kingdom; and were in a very bad Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind for the reception of it. They thought it was a Kingdom, which would flow in Wealth and ſenſual Pleaſures: And that it would gratify their carnal Appetites to the utmoſt, in enriching them with the Spoils, and ſatiating them with the Pleaſures, attending a full Revenge and Conqueſt over their Enemies. So that all the Diſpoſition they were in for the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was, That they had Minds full of Covetouſneſs, Ambition, Oppreſſion, Luxury, Luſt, Cruelty, deſire of Conqueſt, and Revenge; all which wicked Inclinations and Diſpoſitions they were in hopes to gratify to the utmoſt, from the Victories and Proſperity they expected in that new ſtate of things, under the *Meſſiah*. Now becauſe it is this Temper, and theſe Inclinations of the People, and the Diſciples, which I take to have given the true occaſion to this Divine Sermon; and to be *THE RIGHT KEY* to unlock the meaning of it, it will be fit we prove firſt that this was the Temper of their Mind at this time; and that they followed our Saviour upon theſe carnal Expectations: And that it was moſt proper for him in the firſt Place to correct theſe wicked Inclinations and Diſpoſitions, before he Taught them any thing elſe.

That the Multitudes were poſſeſſed with theſe carnal Notions of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, appears every

very where throughout the Hiſtory of the Goſ-
els; and that, not only among the Ignorant ſort;
ut their Great and learned Men, and even our
aviour's beſt Diſciples, the twelve Apoſtles. I
hall not need to Labour this Point, being Univer-
lly granted. Yet becauſe I make this *the Occaſion*
f the Sermon, which I think is a new Obſervation,
will diſtinctly make out theſe three Things which
ſuppoſe will ſufficiently demonſtrate the Truth
f it.

I. That both the Multitudes and our Saviour's
Diſciples, who were his Hearers at this Time, were
repoſſeſſed with carnal Notions of the *Meſſiah*'s
Kingdom.

II. That is was of all things the moſt neceſſary
n the firſt Place to obviate and prevent the Evil
Conſequences of ſuch Notions in the Minds of Men,
s obſtructing all the future benefit of our Saviour's
Doctrine among them.

III. That the Doctrine of this Sermon (particu-
arly this of *the Beatitudes*) is excellently levelled
or that End, even to root out of the Minds of his
Hearers the wrong Belief, and the wrong Diſpoſi-
ions of Mind, which were the Conſequences of
his wrong Notion of the Kingdom of the *Meſ-
ſiah*.

Firſt, That both the Multitudes, and our Savi-
our's Diſciples, who were his Hearers at this time
were prepoſſeſſed with carnal Notions of the *Meſ-
ſiah*'s Kingdom. By carnal Notions of it I mean,
that

that it was to be like one of the Temporal Kingdoms of this World, for Wealth, and Grandeur, Eaſe and Pleaſure, Conqueſt and Revenge, and that the followers of the *Meſſiah* expected to make their Fortunes as to this World, in His Service. The truth of this Obſervation will be evident from the following particulars. 1. We find upon the firſt news that the *Meſſiah* was Born, (which was brought to *Jeruſalem* by the *Eaſtern Magi*) a very great Conſternation in the Court of (*a*) *Herod* and all *Jeruſalem*: He fearing a dangerous Rival; and They the Wars and Troubles, which commonly attend Kingdoms and States, upon ſuch Competitions to the Throne. What was the meaning of this, but that they expected the *Meſſiah* would be a Temporal Prince? This is further confirmed from the Bloody Execution which *Herod* ordered of all the Children in (*b*) *Bethlehem*, and all the Country thereabouts, according to the time of the Birth of the *Meſſiah* which he had diligently inquired of the Wiſe Men. This Action ſhews that his Jealouſy of the *Meſſiah* was kindled to a very great Height: And that this Jealouſy continued all his Days, and a great part of his Son's Days, appears from the Flight of (*c*) *Joſeph* with the Child and his Mother into *Egypt*, and his not Adventuring to return again to *Judea* till *Herod* was Dead, and the news was huſh'd of the *Meſſiah*. 2. Our Saviour's many reproofs

(*a*) Mat. 2. 3. (*b*) Mat. 2. 16. (*c*) Mat. 2. 19, 20, 21,

he Ambition of His Diſciples while they ſtrove (a) *which of them ſhould be the greateſt in his King-om*, are plain Demonſtrations that he thought hey miſtook the Nature of it; and his repre-ending the Multitudes that they followed him (b) *for the Loaves*, that is, for their own Tempo-al Ends; is a clear proof of the ſame thing. 3. The Accuſation of him by his Enemies before *Pon-ius Pilate that he made himſelf a King*; and their rging to *Pilate* that (c) *if he was a Friend of* Cæſar's *e could not let him go*, ſhews plainly that they ooked upon him as a Rival of *Cæſar*'s, and a dan-erous Perſon that might uſurp the Government. . *Laſtly*, the great Diſappointment of his Diſciples pon his Death; and their not forbearing even then, o ſignify what their hopes had been, that he was he Perſon, (d) *who ſhould have Redeemed* Iſrael; nd the ſtrange Queſtion put to him after his Reſur-ection by the Apoſtles aſſembled in a full Body, e) *if he would at that time reſtore again the King-om to* Iſrael, are plain proofs that they, as well as ll the reſt of the People, looked upon him as one hat they truſted would be a great Earthly Prince: nd reſcue the Kingdom of *Iſrael* from Subjection o the *Roman* Yoke, and Glorioufly Reign over hem himſelf.

(a) Mark 9. 34, 35. (b) John 6. 26. (c) John 19. 12. (d) Luke 24. 21. (e) Acts 1. 6.

Se-

Secondly, This being laid down that both the People and the Diſciples expected that the *Meſſiah* would ſet up a worldly Kingdom; and that looking upon *Jeſus* as the *Chriſt* or *Meſſiah*, they flocked after Him in great Numbers upon that account, it was of all things the moſt neceſſary for him, to Rectify theſe their carnal Notions; and to tell them what were the right Preparations and Diſpoſitions of Mind for the new ſtate of things under the *Meſſiah*, commonly called in the New Teſtament *the Kingdom of Heaven*. This of the *Meſſiah*'s worldly Kingdom was ſuch a Fundamental errour, that it was really in vain to offer any other ſpiritual Points of Doctrine to be believed, or Rules of Life to be put in Practice, till they were undeceived in this Matter: This alone being ſufficient to poiſon all the good wholſome Truths, that could be Taught them. For was it not very natural for any Man prepoſſeſs'd with this Notion, to aim at ſome high Preferment in the *Meſſiah*'s Service, and conſequently to let in to his Mind abundance of Covetous and Ambitious Thoughts and Deſigns? Was it not very natural for ſuch a one, to feed himſelf with the Fancy of living a jovial ſenſual Life, as to Eating, Drinking, Building, Purchaſing, and all the utmoſt Gratifications of Luxury? Was it not natural for ſuch a one, to flatter himſelf that he ſhould have a full Revenge and Satisfaction of all his Enemies, and Triumphantly lay them at his Feet? Was it not natural for him, inſtead of applying himſelf

to

to the honeſt, but laborious, and tedious Ways of providing for himſelf, and his Family, by the way of a lawful Calling, to apply himſelf to the unjuſt Ways of Conqueſt, and getting by the power of the Sword? Was it not natural for them in order to their carrying on their ambitious Projects by the Sword, to put off all Bowels of Compaſſion, and to reſolve Cruelly to go through with their Deſigns, and to cut off all that ſtood in the Way of them? Was it not likewiſe a natural Conſequence of this Notion, to expect to gratify their Luſts and carnal Appetites with as great Variety of tempting Objects, as they could deſire or project, and as they thought would be at their Devotion upon ſubduing the flouriſhing *Roman* Empire; and in Order to all this, to ſet the World in a Flame by Wars and Tumults, Inſurrections and Rebellions; and to Perſecute to the utmoſt all that ſtood in their Way, without any Thoughts of forgiving the Injuries, or of patiently bearing the Loſſes they had ſuſtained from their Enemies? Now could any thing be more contrary to Chriſtianity than all theſe Diſpoſitions of Mind: Or could any Good be wrought upon Men ſo poyſoned with ſuch wrong Principles? Certainly then it muſt be granted that it was very neceſſary, that theſe ſhould be rectified in the firſt Place; and that that Rubbiſh ſhould be removed, before any ſolid Foundation of good Doctrine could be laid. But now.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I come to ſhew that the Doctrine of this Sermon on the Mount, particularly this of *the Beatitudes*, is excellently levelled at this end; at the rooting out the wrong Diſpoſitions of Mind which were the natural Conſequences of theſe carnal Notions of Chriſt's Kingdom; and therefore we may ſafely judge this Temper of the People, and of the Diſciples, gave the Occaſion to it. This will appear much better, when we come to conſider the particular Parts of the Sermon; But in general to take a View of it; what is the Purport of all theſe *Beatitudes*, but to tell all Men who were the happy Perſons that were fit for the *Meſſiah's* Kingdom; and to give ſuch Deſcriptions of them, as were directly contrary to the bad Diſpoſitions of Mind they labour'd under, occaſioned by their carnal Notions of that Kingdom? What more contrary to Covetouſneſs and Ambition, than (*a*) *Poverty in Spirit*? What more contrary to a ſenſual, luxurious Life, than a Spirit of (*b*) *Humiliation, Mourning and Repentance*? What more contrary to Fierceneſs, Fury and Revenge, than a Spirit of (*c*) *Meekneſs and Humility*; or to Rapine and unjuſt Conqueſt, than a Spirit of (*d*) *Juſtice and Righteouſneſs*? What more inconſiſtent with Hard-heartedneſs and Cruelty, than (*e*) *Mercifulneſs and Compaſſion*; or with Luſt and Uncleanneſs, than (*f*) *Purity of Heart*? What more contrary to Litigiouſneſs, Inſurrections,

(*a*) Mat. 5. 3. (*b*) *v.* 4. (*c*) *v.* 5. (*d*) *v.* 6. (*e*) *v.* 7. (*f*) *v.* 8 and

and Rebellions, than to be (*a*) *Peaceable and Peace-makers?* Or to Perſecuting others, than (*b*) *Patience and Martyrdom?* So that I think it is very plain, if we can gather our Saviour's Deſign, in this *his looking upon the Multitudes*, either from the preſent bad Temper of their Minds; or from the Conſideration of what was at this Time moſt proper and neceſſary to be offered to Men in their Circumſtances; or from what he actually ſpoke to them in theſe Beatitudes; we muſt conclude that the Occaſion of the Sermon was the Conſideration of the poor People, gladly receiving *the good News of the Kingdom of the* Meſſiah, and believing in *Jeſus*, as the Perſon; but moſt groſly miſtaken in the Nature of that Kingdom, taking it for a *worldly Kingdom*, and ſuch a one as was to be obtained in the ſame way with other worldly Kingdoms, *viz.* in the way of Covetouſneſs, Ambition, Cruelty and Conqueſt, and the ſame way to be made uſe of for all the Purpoſes of Luxury and Senſuality; Notions, which pulled up by the Roots all the Principles of the Moral Law and Natural Religion.

And as our Saviour lays this Foundation in the Beatitudes, the reſt of the Sermon is a deſcant on the ſame Ground; for after he has ſhewed what ſort of Perſons the Subjects of the *Meſſiah's* Kingdom ought to be, he tells theſe his firſt Diſciples,

(*a*) *v.* 9. (*b*) *v.* 10.

not only, how they muſt abſtain from the groſs Vices of the worldly Spirit, but what eminent Degrees of Vertue he expected of them, whom he was to make uſe of to preſerve the reſt of Mankind from thoſe Errors and Corruptions: (*a*) And deſires them by no Means to feed themſelves with the Fancy as if he were come to looſen them from the Obligation of the Moral Law; (*b*) which theſe carnal Notions of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom were apt to make them believe: So far from that, that he came inſtead of diſſolving the Law, to finiſh and Perfect it, by teaching them higher Degrees of Holineſs and Vertue, than their beſt Doctors, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had taught. (*c*) And ſo all that follows in the Sermon is only to inſtruct them in higher Degrees of all Vertues, eſpecially ſuch Vertues as had been moſt miſrepreſented to them, and were moſt directly oppoſite to their carnal Notions of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom: As God willing ſhall appear by the Particulars, when we come to treat of them. So much then for the firſt Inquiry I propoſed to make from the Words, concerning the Occaſion of the Sermon. A Diſcovery, which we ſhall find of good Uſe, in helping us to the true Senſe and Meaning of it; there being no better Way to find out the Meaning of any Author, than to obſerve well the Scope and Deſign which he aims at in his Diſcourſe. It ſeems to me an eſſential Defect, that hitherto

(*a*) Mat. 5. 13, 14. (*b*) v. 17. (*c*) v. 20.

this

this has not ſo much as been enquired after; and it is no Wonder that for want of ſuch a Guide, how to ſteer their Courſe, Interpreters have gone often wrong in the Explication of the particular Parts of the Sermon, and have loſt the Clew and Method of it; as we ſhall have Occaſion to obſerve, when we come to them.

I ſhall obſerve but one Thing more from our Saviour's *Looking on the Multitudes*, namely, that if this Sermon was made upon his obſerving the preſent State and Circumſtances of the People, this ought to be a good Example both to Paſtors and People. To Paſtors; that in the Choice of their Subjects, and the manner of handling them, they have the Circumſtances of their Hearers chiefly in their Eye, and adapt their Diſcourſes to their Neceſſities and Edification: And then to the People, that they take no Offence, when Neceſſary, Free, and Uſeful Truths are deliver'd to them; as if the Preacher deſign'd to have a Fling at them; but that they learn to ſuffer *the Word of Exhortation*; and not only to ſuffer it, but to apply it to their own Edification and Salvation.

As to the other Inquiry I promiſed to make concerning the proper Auditors of the Sermon, I find I muſt refer it to another Opportunity. Now God Bleſs what we have heard, and give us a right Underſtanding in all Things: *To him be all Praiſe, Honour and Glory, Might, Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever.*

SERMON II.

MAT. V. 1.

And ſeeing the Multitudes, he went up into a Mountain: and whem he was ſet, **his Diſciples came unto him.**

V. 2. And he opened his Mouth and taught them ſaying.

The ſecond Sermon on this Text.

IN a former Diſcourſe on theſe Words there were two Things I propoſed to enquire into from them, both very proper to be conſidered in a Preface to this excellent Sermon on the Mount. The firſt was concerning the Scope, Deſign, and Occaſion of the Sermon, which I obſerved was, to undeceive the People and our Saviour's Diſciples, as to the carnal Notions they had of the King-

Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, and the wrong Diſpoſitions of Mind they were infected with, occaſioned by theſe carnal Notions. And this I have already conſidered from theſe firſt Words of the Preface, *And ſeeing* (that is *looking upon, or conſidering*) *the Multitudes.*

I proceed now to the ſecond Inquiry, namely who are the proper Auditors, to whom this Sermon is addreſſed; both from the firſt Words *And ſeeing the Multitudes*, and more eſpecially from theſe laſt Words of the Preface; **His Diſciples came unto him, and he opened his Mouth and taught them.** This is a Queſtion of ſome Difficulty, and of no ſmall Importance; for upon the right Determination of it, will depend the Senſe and Meaning of the ſeveral Parts of the enſuing Sermon; and therefore I hope the Reader will pardon my unuſual length in ſetting off this Point as being the Foundation of all the following Diſcourſes.

There are two ſorts of Auditors here mentioned, the *Multitudes*, and the *Diſciples*. I ſhall enquire particularly into both.

Firſt, That our Saviour deſigned in this Sermon to teach the *Multitudes*, and that his going up into the Mountain was in order to it, that he might be the better ſeen and heard by them, and more at leiſure to teach them in a retired Place, and not as ſome have fancied, that he might withdraw his Diſciples from the Crowd, and give them their Leſſon and Inſtructions apart; I am convinced from

ſeveral Things I obſerve from the Text it ſelf: For 1. The expreſs Deſign and Occaſion of the Sermon was to undeceive both the *Multitudes* and our Saviour's *Diſciples*, as to the carnal Expectations they had from the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom; and to work in them quite contrary Diſpoſitions of Mind to thoſe which they brought along with them, when they began firſt to follow him, as I have ſhewed in the foregoing Diſcourſe. 2. There is nothing in this Sermon, that he needed to make a Secret of; but on the contrary, it is all of it very proper to inform the People, if they intended to follow him, with what Diſpoſitions of Mind they were to enter into his School: How inſtead of a Life of Licentiouſneſs, Rapine, and unjuſt Conqueſt directly contrary to the Precepts of the Moral Law, he expected they ſhould live better Lives than any the ſtricteſt Sects among the *Jews*, and carry their Obedience of the Moral Law to a greater pitch, if they intended to have any Share in the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; The Conſideration, I ſay, how proper and pertinent this Doctrine was, even for the Multitudes, if there were nothing elſe, would induce me to believe our Saviour had an Eye to them in it all. And I am ſo much the more of this Opinion, becauſe I obſerve it was his uſual Cuſtom, when he ſaw any about to follow him, poſſeſſed with worldly Hopes and Expectations, and averſe from Sufferings, preſently to undeceive them, and to tell them how few worldly Encouragements,

and

and how much of the Croſs, and what Occaſions for Self-denial they were to expect in his Service. Thus when a certain Scribe offered himſelf to be one of his Retinue, (*a*) and told him he would follow him whitherſoever he went; our Saviour knowing what *he* aimed at, told him what a poor Life he muſt expect in his Service. *The Foxes have Holes*, ſays he, *and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head.* And when his Diſciples ſhewed a mighty averſion to his Sufferings, upon his firſt acquainting them therewith; and particularly *Peter* took upon him to rebuke him on that Account, *Mark* viii. 34. he not only ſeverely reprimanded *Peter*, but thought fit to undeceive all Mankind, who expected a Life of Eaſe in his Service; for it is ſaid upon that Occaſion, **that calling the People unto him, with his Diſciples alſo**, he ſaid unto them, *Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me.* But we have ſtill clearer Proof of this Matter; For 3. We have an Hint in the Cloſe of the Sermon here, which clearly diſcovers not only that the People were Hearers of it all the while, but that our Saviour deſigned to teach them the Things which are here delivered. For it is ſaid, *Chap.* vii. 28. that when *Jeſus* had ended theſe Sayings, *the People* were aſtoniſhed at

(*a*) Mat. 8. 19.

his Doctrine; for **he taught them**, as one having Authority, and not as the *Scribes*. And *Chap.* viii. 1. (*a*) that *as he came down from the Mountain great Multitudes followed him*; not as we render it, *when he was come down*; and therefore they muſt have been with him on the Mount where the Sermon was preached. 4. Though there wants no further Proof of this Truth; it will caſt great Light upon the Matter to obſerve what St. *Luke* ſays in his Account of a Sermon like this; whether it be the very ſame, or another to the ſame Purpoſe preached at ſome other Time, Interpreters are divided in their Opinions. But either way it will afford us a good Argument, that the People are proper Auditors of this Sermon. For if it be the ſame, by what St. *Luke* ſays, which I ſhall quote preſently, the Queſtion will be ſoon decided, that the People made a part of the Auditory: And if it be not the ſame; yet by a Parity of Reaſon it will follow, if the People were deſigned by our Saviour to be the Hearers of that Sermon in the ſixth *Chapter* of St. *Luke*, which contains the very ſame Doctrine with this, there is no Inconvenience in making them the Auditors of this Sermon too, ſeeing the Words will ſo fairly bear it. Now St. *Luke* takes expreſs Care both in the beginning, and in the end of

(*a*) Καταβάντι δὲ αὐτῷ ἀπὸ τ῀ ὄρους ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί. *Deſcendentem autem eum è monte, ſecuta eſt turba multa* Beza *in* Lo. & Ar. Mont.

the

e Sermon, which he gives us an account of; to t us know that not only our Saviours Diſciples, ut the People were Auditors of it all the while. or before he enters upon that Sermon, he acquaints s very particularly who were the Hearers: (*a*) Tell- g us that *Jeſus* came down with the Twelve, and ood in the plain, and the Company of his Diſciples, nd **a great Multitude of People** out of all *Judea* nd *Jeruſalem* and from the Sea Coaſt of *Tyre* and *don*, **which came to hear him**, and to be healed f their Diſeaſes. Then after an account of his ealing them, follows the Sermon, beginning thus. uke vi. 20. *And he lifted up his Eyes on his Diſ- ples and ſaid: Bleſſed be ye Poor, for yours is the ingdom of God*, &c. Then after he has given n Account of the Sermon in the *6th* chap. it follows mmediately in the beginning of the (*b*) *7th* chap. hat he ended all his Sayings **in the Audience of the People.** Seeing then both St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke* who have given us the account of this Sermon (or heſe Sermons) in which the *Beatitudes* are treated, hought it neceſſary both in the beginning, and in he cloſe of their accounts, to mention *the People* s a part of the auditory, I muſt conclude that ei- her *they* were deſigned to be Taught directly; or hat the Leſſons which were given to the Diſ- iples in their Audience, were likewiſe deſigned for

(*a*) Luke 6. 17. (*b*) Luke 7. 1.

their

their uſe. And I am the more confirmed in this from the Application which our Saviour makes in the end of both theſe accounts of St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*; which is in as general Terms, comprehending all ſorts of Auditors both People and Diſciples, as poſſibly could be expreſſed. Therefore (*a*) **whoſoever heareth theſe Sayings of Mine and doth them,** *I will liken him unto a Wiſe Man, which built his Houſe upon a Rock,* &c. (*b*) **And every one that heareth theſe Sayings of Mine and doth them not,** *ſhall be likened unto a Fooliſh Man, which Built his Houſe upon the Sand.* And in the ſame general Terms St. *Luke* concludes the Sermon, which he gives us an account of. *Luke* vi. 47, 48, and 49. from all which I conclude that this Sermon was deſigned by our Saviour for the general uſe of all Men, tho' it might be, and was more immediately addreſſed to his Diſciples; to undeceive them as to their Worldly expectations, and to inſtruct them more perfectly in their duty; from which they thought to have been exempted. And who *they* were, is what we are next to enquire into.

Secondly then, that this Sermon was more immediately addreſſed to our Lords *Diſciples*, appears both from the Words of the Text, *when he was ſet, his Diſciples came unto him, and he*

(*a*) Mat. 7. 24. (*b*) Mat. 7. 26.

opened

pened his Mouth and Taught them; and from St. *Luke*'s account of the ſame or the like Sermon, *Luke* vi. 20. where it is written that *he lifted up his Eyes, on his Diſciples*, and ſaid, *Bleſſed be ye Poor, &c.* But now the Word *Diſciples* being uſed in a Narrower or wider Senſe in the *New Teſtament*, ſometimes by way of Excellence only for the Twelve choſen Diſciples, called likewiſe *Apoſtles*; but much oftner for all *Chriſt*'s *Scholars*, that is, for all that followed him with a deſign to Learn any thing of him, namely all Chriſtians: There is a neceſſary Queſtion to be here decided, what is the meaning of the Word *Diſciples* in this Place? For if by it we are to mean only the *Apoſtles*, and in their Apoſtolical Capacity, it will be an hard matter to prove that the Doctrine and Precepts of this Sermon are binding upon all Chriſtians, as we generally believe they are. Then we ſhall leave a large gap for private Chriſtians to creep out from the Obligations of theſe Duties, as being Deſigned only for that Superiour rank of Apoſtles. But if it be found that by *Diſciples* here are meant all Chriſtians; as upon a diligent Scrutiny into that Matter, I verily, believe they are, and ſhall preſently give you ſome good Reaſons for it; then we muſt conclude that this Sermon is univerſally binding upon all Chriſtians whatſoever. In order then to the finding out the true meaning in this place.

1. It is to be premiſed in general, that by the Word *Diſciples*, are underſtood in the *New Teſtament* the

the Scholars or followers of any Maſter, or Teacher; as *Mark* ii. 18. we hear of the *Diſciples* of *John*, and the *Diſciples* of the *Phariſees*, and the *Diſciples* of *Jeſus*. *Why do the Diſciples of John and of the* Phariſees *faſt, but thy Diſciples faſt not?* So *John* ix. 27, 28. the Man whom *Jeſus* had reſtored to his Sight being Born Blind, aſked the *Phariſees*, when he ſaw he could not ſatisfy their Inquiſitiveneſs, why they would hear the ſame thing over and over again; *will ye alſo*, ſays he, *be his Diſciples? Then they Reviled him and ſaid, thou art his Diſciple, but we are Moſes's Diſciples.*

2. In this Senſe of the Word we find commonly all that followed *Chriſt*, with a deſign to Learn of him, all that had a good Opinion of him or his Doctrine, in ſhort all that were afterwards called *Chriſtians*, go in the *New Teſtament* by the Name of his *Diſciples*, and not the *Apoſtles* only. Thus *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* is ſaid to be *Jeſus*'s *Diſciple*, *Matthew* xxvii. 57. and he that aſked leave to go firſt and Bury his Father is called *another of his Diſciples*, *Matthew* viii. 21. Thus St. *Luke* informs us that our Lord called unto him *his Diſciples* and *of them*, or rather (*a*) *out of them* he choſe Twelve whom he alſo named Apoſtles, *Luke* vi. 13. And at the 17 *v.* of that Chapter beſides theſe Twelve we hear of *the Company or Multitude of his Diſ-*

(*a*) ἀπ' αὐτῶν, &

ciples

ples, ὁ ὄχλος μαθητῶν ἀυτοῦ. And *Luke* xix. 37. mong the Crouds that huzza'd him into *Jeruſalem* e have an account of *the whole Multitude of the Diſciples*, ἅπαν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν. And t. *John* tells us *John* vi. 66. that *from that time any of his Diſciples went back and walked no ore with him* after they found he was not like o anſwer their Worldly expectations. Now theſe *Diſciples* that forſook him could be none of the welve *Apoſtles*, for it follows immediately that *eſus* ſaid to the Twelve, *will ye alſo go away?* (*a*) And *ohn* iv. 1. It is ſaid *the* Phariſees *heard that* Jeſus *ade and Baptized more Diſciples than* John. The ſame ompellation of Diſciples was uſed for all that wned the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, after our Lords Aſcenſion into Heaven. As *Acts* i. 15. it is ſaid hat *Peter ſtood up in the midſt of the Diſciples:* Theſe could not be the *Apoſtles* only, for it fol-ows immediately, that the Number of their Names ogether was then about an hundred and twenty. And *Acts* vi. 1. we hear that *the Number of the Diſciples was Multiplied.* And at the 2 *v.* that *the Twelve alled the Multitude of the Diſciples unto them*, to con-ult with them concerning the Election of Deacons. And at the 7 *v.* that *the Word of God increaſed, nd the Number of the Diſciples Multiplied in* Jeruſalem *greatly.* And Chapter ix. *v.* 1. that Saul *ſtill breathed out Threatning and Slaughter*

(*a*) John 6. 66.

againſt

againſt the Diſciples of the Lord. And what is meant by this we may Learn from the next verſe, where his Commiſſion, which he deſired was, that *if he found any of this Way whether Men or Women, he might bring them bound to Jeruſalem.* And in ſhort wherever the Word is uſed afterwards in the *New Teſtament* as it is very frequently, it is conſtantly uſed in this Senſe: and therefore I ſhall not need to quote the Places. Only that ye may ſee that the Word *Diſciples* was uſed then in the ſame Latitude with the Word *Chriſtians*, which ſucceded to it, I ſhall put you in Mind of one paſſage of St. *Luke. Acts* ii. 26. which tells us when the Word *Chriſtian* began to be uſed inſtead of the Word *Diſciple. The Diſciples* ſays he, *were called Chriſtians firſt in Antioch.* But tho' they were *firſt* called *Chriſtians* there, it was long before that Name generally obtained; for as far as the ſacred Writings of the *New Teſtament* go, we find it very rarely uſed in them; but the Words *Diſciples*, *Brethren*, *Believers*, and *the Church* were generally then in uſe. I have inſiſted ſo much the longer on this, becauſe by a vulgar Sort of error I think it is run away with by a great many Readers, and Interpreters: That by the Word *Diſciples* are to be underſtood only the *Twelve* choſen *Diſciples* called likewiſe *Apoſtles*; and upon this Notion a great part of this Sermon has by the greater Number of Interpreters been reſtrained to them, without any ſolid Ground from the Text it ſelf. For tho' I confeſs the Apoſtles

καὶ ἐξοχὴν are ſeveral times called our Lord's Diſciples, yet as far as I can perceive, they are never ſo called in any Thing peculiar to the Apoſtolick Office, without the addition of the Word *Twelve*, or *Eleven*, to diſtinguiſh them from ordinary Diſciples; and to let us know what belonged to them in their Apoſtolick Capacity: For in other Places where they are called ſimply *Diſciples*, they act in the Capacity of ordinary Learners or Chriſtians; and what is ſaid to them in that Capacity is binding upon all Chriſtians. And that the Word *Diſciples* here in my Text is to be underſtood of all our Saviour's Diſciples in that larger Senſe, that is of all Chriſtians, and not of the *Twelve* only in their Apoſtolick or Paſtoral Capacity, is what I hope now to prove to the Satisfaction of unbyaſſed Judges, and by that Means to put an end to ſeveral erroneous Interpretations of diverſe Parts of this Sermon, which have been Occaſioned purely by this miſtake.

1. My firſt Argument to prove this, ſhall be taken from this Evangeliſts account of the Election of the Twelve Apoſtles which is not antecedent, but ſubſequent to this Sermon, *viz.* At the Tenth Chapter of this Goſpel; from whence I argue thus, that if when this Sermon on the Mount was preached, there were no ſuch Officers in being as *Apoſtles*; But all *Chriſtians* were as yet in the rank of *Diſciples*, then what is here ſaid to the *Diſciples*, can't fairly be interpreted to be meant of them in their Apoſtolick,

Apoſtolick, but in their common Chriſtian Capacity, and conſquently this whole Sermon being addreſſed to *the Diſciples*, before any of them were made *Apoſtles*, muſt be meant of, and applyed properly to all Chriſtians in general. I foreſee what will be anſwered to this argument; It is to be gathered from the learned *Calvin*, and a Multitude of other Commentators, namely, that as to the Timing of things St. *Matthew* is not always very exact, and does not pretend to give us them in the ſame order as they were done, as (*a*) St. *Luke* doth: And that St. *Luke* before he gives us an Account of this Sermon, which begins *Luke* vi. 20. doth firſt, *viz.* At the thirteenth verſe of that Chapter, give an Account of the Election of the *Twelve Apoſtles*; and therefore that it is moſt probable they were elected before this Sermon was preached. This is plauſible enough; but I have two or three things to reply to it, which will ſufficiently invalidate the force of this anſwer. 1. That the whole force of it depends upon a ſuppoſition that this Sermon is the ſame individual Sermon with that of St. *Luke:* Which it will be a hard Matter for any Man to prove, there being much greater Difficulties to be accounted for by them who make them one and the ſame Sermon, than by them who make them two, and preached at different times. For

(*a*) Luke 1. 3.

all

all the Inconveniency I can perceive in this laſt Opinion is, that our Saviour at two ſeveral times, and in two ſeveral places, and for ought we know in the hearing of two ſeveral Crowds of Auditors, preached two Sermons very like to each other. And where's the harm of this Suppoſition, that ſo neceſſary Doctrine as this was, might be preached by our Saviour at two ſeveral Times, to two ſeveral Auditories: Nay if it had been to one and the ſame Auditory, to urge the ſame important truths, and to imprint them more firmly upon his Diſciples who were preſent at both? We find ſeveral other Truths which our Saviour urged oftner than once upon his Diſciples. Not to ſpeak of the Lord's Prayer, which was twice Taught, and upon two ſeveral Occaſions, *Matthew* vi. 9. and *Luke* xi. 2. I will give you one inſtance of a Doctrine which our Saviour preached at leaſt Six or Seven ſeveral times to his Diſciples, with leſs variation of expreſſion then there is between St *Mat.* and St. *Luke* in their accounts of this Sermon; it is his foretelling his Death and Sufferings. St. *Matthew* tells us of this *Mat.* xvi. 21. after the Queſtion what the World ſaid of him, and after he had found that his Diſciples believed him to be the Chriſt; *From that time* ſays *St.* Matthew *began* Jeſus *to ſhew unto his Diſciples, how that he muſt go unto* Jeruſalem, *and ſuffer many things of the Elders, and Chief Prieſts and Scribes, and be killed, and be Raiſed again the Third Day.* The ſame

Doctrine, the ſame St. *Matthew* chap. xvii. *v.* 22. tells us that *Jeſus* preached to his Diſciples before they came out of *Galilee*. And the ſame again chap. xx. *v.* 17. in his laſt Journey to *Jeruſalem*. We have the ſame a fourth time two Days before his laſt Paſſover, *Matthew* xxvi. 2. And a Fifth time *v.* 12. in Juſtification of Mary *that poured the precious Ointment upon him*, which he ſaid *was againſt his Burial*; and a Sixth time at his laſt Supper *v.* 23. and a Seventh time in the Garden immediately before he was apprehended *v.* 45. Here then is a Doctrine recorded by one Evangeliſt, expreſly to have been delivered to the ſame Diſciples ſeven ſeveral times; beſides that it was the Subject of the Diſcourſe at the Transfiguration, (*a*) where were preſent Three of the ſame Diſciples. And now ſhall any Body wonder if a great part of this moſt uſeful Sermon was preached oftner than once? So that there is no Inconveniency attends this ſuppoſition, that they are two different Sermons; This, and That in the *6th* of St. *Luke*. And if they are, the order of both Evangeliſts concerning the Election of the Apoſtles may be eaſily reconciled; for they might be only in the number of common Diſciples, when this Sermon was preached which is recorded by St. *Matthew*; and conſtituted *Apoſtles* a little before that Sermon which St.

(*a*) Luke 9. 31.

Luke

Luke give us an Account of in the *6th* chapter of his Goſpel. And if ſo, all this anſwer concerning the Election of the Apoſtles, as far as relates to this Sermon, is quite out of Doors. And all that is here ſaid muſt be underſtood to relate to Diſciples at large, that is to all Chriſtians; for by this ſuppoſition at that time there were no other. But they who aſſert that theſe two are one and the ſame Sermon, but once preached, have a great many more difficulties to account for, namely for St. *Lukes* omitting above one half of it; for St. *Lukes* Saying that his Sermon was preached in the Plain, when St. *Matthew's* was Preached on the Mount; for St. *Lukes* making the healing of the *Leper*, and the calling of *Matthew*, prior to his Sermon, whereas St. *Matthew* makes them both poſteriour to his: Beſides diverſe other more Minute Variations. But 2*ly*. Suppoſe we ſhould grant that theſe Sermons are both one, but once Preached, only more largely rehearſed by St. *Matthew*, and more Compendiouſly by St. *Luke*, and that one or other of them in Matters not Material might neglect the Chronology, I do not ſee how this would mend the Matter: For ſuppoſing the Apoſtles had been choſen before this Sermon, as St. *Luke* relates it, it will not follow that whatever was ſpoke to them afterwards was ſpoke in their Apoſtolick Capacity; and not as private if Chriſtians. For if the general Obſervation I made before, (which I will now more fully repeat) holds good, that whatever is ſaid of, or to the Twelve

under the common Compellation of *Diſciples*, (without Diſtinguiſhing them either in the place it ſelf, or in the Context, or at leaſt in ſome parallel account of ſome other Evangeliſt, either by their proper Names, or by their Number of *Twelve*, or *Eleven* after the Death of *Judas*; ſo that it appears plainly what particular ſort of Diſciples are deſigned) is always to be underſtood to belong to them in their *Chriſtian*, not their *Apoſtolick* Capacity; If I ſay this Obſervation holds good, (as I believe it does, for I have examined all thoſe places in the *New Teſtament* which are upwards of an hundred, and can't find one exception) then for all the prior Election of Apoſtles, this Sermon being addreſſed to our Saviour's *Diſciples*, tho' by that Word are comprehended the Perſons of the Apoſtles, yet it belongs to them only as Diſciples, in their *Chriſtian*, not in their *Apoſtolick* Capacity; and therefore ought to be interpreted as relating to all Chriſtians, and not reſtrained to the Office of Apoſtles of old, or Paſtors and Teachers in following times. 2*ly* to go further ſtill upon this granted ſuppoſition of this and the Sermon in St. *Luke* being all one, and but once preached (which is more than any Man can prove) yet there are two things we may obſerve in St. *Lukes* account of it, from both which the Limitation of any part of the Sermon to Apoſtles falls to the Ground, and it muſt all of it belong to Diſciples at large or Chriſtians in general. The firſt is, that tho' our Saviour before

the

the Sermon ſeparated the twelve from the reſt of the Diſciples, and took them into his own Family; and tho' by way of Diſtinction and Anticipation they are called *Apoſtles*, as *Judas* wherever he is mentioned in the Goſpels by Anticipation and Diſtinction is called or deſcribed as the Traitour, long before the Hiſtory of his Betraying his Maſter; Yet really even by St. *Lukes* account, they had not their Commiſſion of Apoſtles, nor were they choſen into that Office, but only deſigned for it; till a conſiderable time after that Sermon in St. *Luke* was preached; ſo that both *St.* Matthew and *St.* Luke agree in making their Apoſtolick Commiſſion Poſterior to the Sermon, or Sermons we are a ſpeaking of. For *St. Matthew* gives an account of this Sermon in the *5th*, *6th*, and *7th* Chapters of his Goſpel, then of the firſt Commiſſion to work Miracles, and to Preach, in the beginning of the *10th*, *chap. St. Luke* gives an account of the Sermon *chap. 6.* then of the Apoſtles Commiſſion to work Miracles and to Preach the Goſpel, in the beginning of the *9th chap.* And it is the very ſame firſt Commiſſion and Inſtructions *St. Matthew* has in his tenth *Chapter*. It is true *chap.* vi. 13. *St. Luke* gives an account of the Election of *the Twelve*, before the Sermon, but as Interpreters generally confeſs, that was only *Chriſts* ſeparating them from the reſt of the Diſciples, and taking them into his own Family: For they were not properly Apoſtles, till they had their Commiſſion; only *Chriſt* thought

fit to take them nearer to his own Perſon for ſome time, the better to prepare them for that high Office, in which he deſigned to employ them afterwards. This is not only a conjecture, which the nature of the Thing and the reconciling St. *Mathew* and St. *Luke* Suggeſts; but St. *Mark* too very clearly points at it, when he mentions the firſt ſeparation of the *Twelve*, which St. *Matthew* had omitted in its proper Place, and did not ſpeak of till he came to their Commiſſion. For St. *Mark chap.* iii. 14. gives this account of the Matter. *And he ordained* (or appointed) *Twelve* (*a*) **that they ſhould be with Him**, *and that he might ſend them forth to Preach and to have power to heal Sickneſſes, and to caſt out Devils*; where the firſt thing that was to follow upon this Deſignation was, that *they were to be with Chriſt*, his inſeparable Companions, to be fitted there for the other high Office of Apoſtleſhip, which was to follow. And Chronologiſts, particularly the learned Dr. *Lightfoot* in his Chronicle, proves that there was about the ſpace of a Year between the firſt aſſuming them into *Chriſts* Family, and the ſending them out as Apoſtles. St. *Mark* too takes Notice of a great ſpace of time, between the firſt Separating the *Twelve*, when they were taken into *Chriſt's* Family, and the ſending them out with the Apoſtolick Commiſſion; the firſt he

(*a*) ἐποίησε δώδεκα i. e. *he appointed* Twelve.

has

has *chap.* iii. 14. and the other not till *chap* vi. 7. If then they were not made Apoſtles till after the Sermon, even by St. *Luke's* account, as well as St. *Matthew's* then this Sermon, nor any part of it, could be addreſſed to them in that Capacity. The other thing we may obſerve from St. *Lukes* account of this Sermon (for we are ſtill upon the ſuppoſition, that his and St. *Matthews* are both one) is, that in deſcribing the Hearers of the Sermon, after he had named firſt the Twelve choſen Diſciples who were then ſeparated, and afterwards made Apoſtles; he mentions next **the Company of our Saviours Diſciples**; that is all his other Scholars whom he Taught; Then thirdly great Multitudes of *People out of all* Judea *and* Jeruſalem, *and from the Sea Coaſt of* Tyre *and* Sydon **which came to hear Him**, *and to be healed of their Diſeaſes*, *Luke* vi. 17. It follows *v.* 20. *that he lifted up his Eyes on his Diſciples and ſaid, bleſſed be ye Poor*, &c. Now if the *Diſciples* on whom he lifted up his Eyes, *v.* 20. be the ſame *Company of Diſciples* mentioned *v.* 17. allowing the *Twelve* into the number of *Diſciples*; (for it is confeſſed of all ſides that they were ſtill *Diſciples*,) then it follows very plainly, that the proper Auditors of this Sermon are all our Saviour's Diſciples in general, *the Twelve* and all the reſt in their Chriſtian Capacity, that is all Chriſtians: And that the Sermon is not reſtrained to *the Twelve* only, nor addreſſed to them in their Apoſtolick Capacity. So much for the Hints which are given us of the proper Au-

ditors of this Sermon by St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, who give us the accounts of it. There are ſeveral other plain Obſervations may be made to the ſame purpoſe from the Body of the Sermon it ſelf; but having already exceeded our uſual time, I muſt refer what remains to another opportunity, when I hope to ſhew the great Importance, as well as the truth of this Doctrine, concerning the proper Auditors of this Sermon, and the Influence it ought to have upon our Lives and Converſations. Now God bleſs what we have heard, and give us a Right underſtanding in all things: *To him let us render as is due, all Praiſe, Honour and Glory, Might, Power and Dominion, for ever and ever Amen.*

SER-

SERMON III.

MAT. V. 1.

And ſeeing the Multitudes, he went up into a Mountain: and whem he was ſet, **his Diſciples came unto him.**

V. 2. **And he opened his Mouth and taught them,** *ſaying.*

The third Sermon on this Text.

NOT to trouble you with Repetition; the Point we were laſt upon was to find out who were the proper Hearers of this Sermon; a Point of the greateſt Conſequence, both for the right Interpretation of the whole Sermon; and to prevent the Subterfuges of a great many, who would be glad to creep out from the ſtrict Duties

ties here enjoined, as not being deſigned for private Chriſtians; but for the higher Office of Apoſtles. The Hearers of the Sermon I obſerved to you were the *Multitudes*, and the *Diſciples*. By the *Multitudes* I underſtand thoſe promiſcuous Crowds that followed our Saviour either for Cures, or to ſatisfy their Curioſity; to ſee and hear ſo wonderful a Perſon, that wrought ſo many Miracles, though they did not as yet believe in him. And by the *Diſciples*, I underſtand thoſe who not only followed him, but ſo far believed in him as to chooſe him for their Maſter and Teacher; and I ſuppoſe many of them believed him to be the *Meſſiah*, and were Baptized in his Name. (*a*) The chief Error Interpreters have run upon, occaſioned by this Word **Diſciples**, is the limiting of them to the Twelve choſen *Diſciples* in their Apoſtolick Capacity; whereas what is here ſaid to the *Diſciples*, is to be underſtood of *Diſciples* at large, that is Chriſtians in general, and not to be limited to *Apoſtles*. I obſerved to you that this was the conſtant Uſe of the Word in the *New Teſtament*; and that if at any Time it was reſtrained to thoſe few choſen *Diſciples*, who were likewiſe called *Apoſtles*, in their Apoſtolique or Paſtoral Capacity, Care was taken by the Addition of the Number *Twelve*, or *Eleven* after the Apoſtacy of *Judas*, that one or other of the Evangeliſts did plainly intimate to us

(*a*) John 3. 22. & 4, 1.

that

that Deſignation; and in all other Places, where there is no ſuch Limitation, that by the Word *Diſciples* are meant in general all Chriſtians; Or if by the Context the *Twelve choſen Diſciples* are intended, yet what is ſaid to, or of them, without theſe expreſs Limitations, is ſaid in their *Chriſtian*, and not in their *Apoſtolique* Capacity. Having obſerved thus much of the Uſe of the Word *Diſciples* in the *New Teſtament* in general, which is ſufficient to ground my Interpretation upon; yet becauſe ſo great a Structure is to be built upon this Foundation; and becauſe this leads me in a Way ſo different from many other learned Interpreters; I undertook further to make out by clear Arguments from the Text and Context, that by the Word Diſciples, in this Preface, are to be meant *Diſciples* at large, that is Chriſtians in general, without any Limitation to the *Twelve choſen Diſciples* in their Apoſtolique Capacity; though they are included as *Diſciples*: From whence it will clearly follow that whatever is afterwards ſaid in the Sermon, (unleſs otherwiſe ſpecified and directed than in this Preface) belongs entirely to all Chriſtians in general; and is by no Means to be limited to *Apoſtles*, or their Succeſſors the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church.

The firſt Argument I made uſe of to prove this, was that the conſtituting of Apoſtles was poſteriour to this Sermon; and that they who were afterwards made Apoſtles, at the time when this Sermon was preached, were as yet but in the Rank of *Diſciples*;

ciples; and had not then their Apoſtolical Commiſſion. This I proved at large from the Relations of St. *Matthew*, and St. *Luke*, who are the only Writers that have left us an Account of this Sermon; and have been much more careful to clear this Matter than Interpreters are aware of.

I proceed now to another ſort of Arguments, taken from Obſervations upon the Body of the Sermon itſelf, by which I doubt not to make it very plain, that unleſs we will go contrary to all the Rules of ſpeaking and reaſoning, this Sermon muſt be underſtood as directed to all Chriſtians, and ought not to be limited to Apoſtles or Paſtors.

(1.) *Firſt* then, it appears from the Sermon itſelf, that it is all addreſs'd to one Auditory. There are no Words; no not ſo much as Looks or Glances mentioned, from which we may be allow'd to infer, that ſome Parts of it are deſigned for Ordinary Chriſtians, and ſome other Parts for Apoſtles. From which Obſervation I argue thus; that if by the Word **Diſciples** we are to underſtand the Twelve Apoſtles excluſive of common Chriſtians, then the whole Sermon muſt be addreſſed to Apoſtles; and it is by Chance if private Chriſtians have any thing to do with it. All the *Ye's* and *You's* and *Thou's*, and all the Verbs that are uſed here in the ſecond Perſon, I would fain know who they are addreſs'd to; for it is an unaccountable Liberty to allow an Interpreter out of a great many Precepts, which by the

the ordinary Senſe and Meaning of the Words are addreſſed to the ſame Auditors, to ſay that ſome of theſe *Ye*'s belong only to one ſort of Hearers, and ſome of them, perhaps in the ſame Sentence, to another; For Example, who could bear it, if an Interpreter ſhould ſay that theſe Words, *v.* 11. (*a*) *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you,* belong to all Chriſtians; and the next *Ye*, almoſt in the ſame Breath; (*b*) *Ye are the Salt of the Earth; and ye are the Light of the World,* belong only to Apoſtles; and the next again in the ſame Paragraph, (*c*) *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven,* belong to all Chriſtians? Is not this to abuſe any Author, and to give the Interpreter a lawleſs Liberty of putting what Senſe he pleaſes upon him; nay Senſes totally incoherent and inconſiſtent with the common Rules of Speech? Since then it muſt be confeſs'd, that the far greateſt Part of this Sermon will bear no other Senſe but to be addreſs'd to *Diſciples* at large, that is Chriſtians in general; and yet in one continued Tenour of Diſcourſe it is all addreſſed to one and the ſame Auditory, that Auditory muſt be Chriſtians in general, unleſs there be ſomething of particular *Apoſtrophe* by Looks, or Geſtures, or Words, or the neceſſity of the Matter, that obliges us to believe it is deſigned for any

(*a*) Mat. 5. 11, 12. (*b*) Mat. 5. 13. (*c*) Mat. 5. 16.

other

other Hearers. And that this is not the Caſe in any of the Addreſſes of this Sermon; that there is nothing ſaid in them but what is very proper for Chriſtians in general, might be eaſily demonſtrated; but that it would be too great a Digreſſion in this Place; and will come in more properly, when we come to explain thoſe Paſſages of the Sermon, which have by ſome been thought to be Deſcriptions of the Duty and Character of Apoſtles. There it ſhall be ſhewed, that all Chriſtians (*a*) are *the Salt of the Earth*, that is, that they are all to be inſtrumental in ſeaſoning and ſanctifying the putrid Converſation of the World, and in preſerving Men from Corruption; and likewiſe that all Chriſtians are to be ſo far (*b*) *the Light of the World, as to ſhine brightly in it by a moſt exemplary Converſation*; and theſe two are the only Paſſages that ſeem to look more particularly towards the Apoſtolical or Paſtoral Function. And therefore there is no Occaſion in the leaſt to vary the Meaning of the Addreſs throughout the whole Sermon; but they are the ſame ye that are meant, when our Saviour ſays, *Ye are the Salt of the Earth, and ye are the Light of the World*; as when he ſays *after this Manner*, (*c*) *Pray ye, Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. (*d*) or *whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do to you, do even ſo to them*; and when he gives them all the other ex-

(*a*) Mat. 5. 13. (*b*) Mat. 5. 14. (*c*) Mat. 6. 9. (*d*) Mat. 7. 12.

cellent

cellent Precepts contained in this incomparable Sermon, which is the beſt Collection of Common Chriſtian Duties of any in the World.

(2.) Next to the Addreſs, if we will conſider the Occaſion, Scope, and Deſign, of the whole Diſcourſe; which, as I have already ſhewed, was to correct the common Errors about the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; and to cure Men's wrong Diſpoſitions for it; This muſt convince us that the proper Auditors of it are all our Saviour's Diſciples in general, and not the Twelve only. For all theſe Errors and bad Diſpoſitions being general, there is all Reaſon to interpret theſe Precepts of our Saviour, which are deſigned to cure thoſe Errors and Diſtempers, in a general Senſe; and as directed to the Community of Auditors; otherwiſe the Remedy would not be proportioned to the Diſtemper; and the Plaiſter would be narrower than the Sore. Beſides how incongruous a thing would it be, when even the promiſcuous Multitudes, as I formerly ſhewed, were taught by this Sermon, to exclude any of our Lord's Diſciples; or to limit the Diſcourſe to the *Twelve* only?

(3.) The many excellent Precepts contained in this Sermon do all of them manifeſtly belong to the Duty of Chriſtians in general, and not one of them is to be limited to the Apoſtolical Function: And therefore the proper Auditors of this Sermon muſt be all Chriſtians, in their Chriſtian, not *Apoſtles* and Paſtors in their Apoſtolique or Paſtoral Capa-

Capacity. I know not ſo much as one Duty here recommended, which thoſe very Interpreters, who make a great Part of the Sermon to relate to the Apoſtolique Function, will not confeſs to be a Duty incumbent on private Chriſtians, except one, by a Miſtake of a new Opinion, which I ſhall conſider in a Poſtſcript to this Diſcourſe. Is it not then much more probable that it is deſigned for *Diſciples* at large, that is for all Chriſtians, whoſe Duty it exactly deſcribes, than for *Apoſtles*, none of whoſe Duty it deſcribes, but in ſo far as is common to them with other Chriſtians?

(4.) The many excellent Arguments, with which the Precepts of this Sermon are backed and enforced, are all taken from Conſiderations equally binding upon all Chriſtians; and not one of them peculiar to the Apoſtolical Function. I ſhall ſhew this in the Poſtcript to this Sermon, as to the Arguments brought to diſſwade from Covetouſneſs, and the inordinate Cures of the World. The ſame may be obſerved of all the other Duties; they are all enforced with Conſiderations taken from the Perfection of Chriſtianity, and from the Promiſes of Admiſſion to the Kingdom of Heaven; and Threatnings of Excluſion from it; or ſome other Reaſons equally binding upon all. And therefore whatever force is in them, it equally relates to all Chriſtians.

(5.) I ſhall add but one Conſideration more taken from the Form and Style of this Sermon; as the former

former have been from the matter of it. And as to this.

(1) I obſerve what a different Style St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke* uſe, when they intend to acquaint us with any thing peculiar to *Apoſtles*, from what they uſe with Relation to *Diſciples* or *Chriſtians* in general; for as here, and in St. *Luke* too, both in the beginning and end of the Sermon, care is taken to mention *the People and the Diſciples* as Hearers, ſo in the tenth *chap.* of this Goſpel, where we have the firſt Apoſtolical Commiſſion, the ſame care is taken both at the beginning and end, and in diverſe other Parts of that Diſcourſe, to Limit it to *the Twelve:* For at the firſt verſe he tells us how *Chriſt* called unto him **his twelve Diſciples**. At the 2*d. v.* he calls them **the twelve Apoſtles**. Then follow all their Names. Then at the 5*th*, *v.* **theſe Twelve** *Jeſus ſent forth and commanded them ſaying.* Then when that Diſcourſe was ended: *Chapter* 10. it follows immediately *chap.* 11. *v.* 1. that *Jeſus made an end of commanding his twelve Diſciples.* It is very obſervable, I ſay, how the Evangeliſt alters his Style, and how carefully he Diſtinguiſhes between his Deſcription of *Diſciples* at large, or common Chriſtians, and the twelve choſen *Diſciples*, called *Apoſtles.* And in like manner St. *Luke chap.* ix. 1. Deſcribing the Apoſtolick Commiſſion begins thus; *Then he called his twelve Diſciples together*, &c.

(2) I obſerve that there is no Variation of the Addreſs throughout the whole Sermon; but it is the

ſame Auditory to which it is all directed. Nay there is not ſo much as a Look, or Geſture taken notice of, as there is in ſome others Parts of the Goſpels, when our Saviour means to reach other Perſons then thoſe to whom he immediately directs his Diſcourſe. To give one inſtance of what I mean by this Obſervation. St. *Mark* relates the Hiſtory of our Saviours rebuking *Peter* for contradicting him ſo raſhly when he foretold his Paſſion, and of his correcting that Spirit of his, which was ſo averſe to the Croſs. And there is in that Hiſtory one Circumſtance of our Saviours Looks taken notice of, which is very inſtructive. We have it Mark viii. 33. *When he had turned about*, ſays he, **and looked on his Diſciples** *he rebuked* Peter, *ſaying Get thee behind me Satan; for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of Men.* This *Look on the other Diſciples* implies that though *Peter* had the forwardneſs to come out with this his averſion to the Croſs, the reſt of our Saviours *Diſciples*, though ſilent, were of the ſame Opinion; and therefore St. *Mark* records this *Look on the Diſciples* as joined with this Rebuke of *Peter*. Now if there were any the leaſt intimation in all this Sermon, that our Saviour had ſo much as by his Looks or Geſtures directed any part of it to *the Twelve*, excluſive of others, I ſhould readily conſent to interpret ſuch part as relating to the Apoſtolique or Paſtoral function, or both. But while neither the Letter of the Words,

nor

nor the Ceremony of the Looks and Actions, favour any ſuch Conjecture; nor the matter of the Diſcourſe neceſſarily requires it, I muſt think it much ſafer and better, and more agreeable to our Lords intention, as well as to the exact Rules of Speaking and Reaſoning, to interpret theſe General precepts as meant of, and to all Chriſtians, than to reſtrain any of them to Paſtors and *Apoſtles*. Or if any thing is to be gathered from our Saviours Looks, it is that the Doctrine of this Sermon belongs to *all Men*; for what we render here *Seeing the Multitudes*, might be as well rendered *Looking upon the Multitudes*. For ſo we Tranſlate the ſame Word in that forecited Place, (*a*) *Mark* viii. 33.

(3) The laſt Thing I ſhall obſerve from the Style of the Sermon is that from all the *Compariſons* and *Antitheſes* uſed in it, It appears the Sermon was deſigned to teach Chriſtians their Duty in general, as they are Diſtinguiſhed from *Heathens*, *Hypocrites*, *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; but not *Paſtors* their particular Duty, as diſtinct from that of *Laicks* and Common People. For the Compariſons and Antitheſes run thus. (*b*) *Except your Righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the Righteoouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees.* (*c*) *When thou doſt thine Alms do not ſound a Trumpet before thee as the Hypocrites do. And when thou Prayeſt thou ſhall not be as the Hypocrites.* (*d*) *And when ye Faſt*

(*a*) καὶ ἰδὼν τὸς μαθητὰς αὐτῦ *and looked on his Diſciples.* (*b*) Mat. 5. 20. (*c*) Mat. 6. 2. (*d*) Mat. 6. 5.

be not as the Hypocrites. (*a*) *Uſe not vain Repetitions, as the Heathen do.* (*b*) *After all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek,* &c. (*c*) So that all along *Chriſtianity* is ſet in oppoſiton to *Judaiſm*, *Heatheniſm* *Phariſaiſm* and *Hypocriſy*. But in the whole Sermon there is not any Compariſon or Antitheſis between *Apoſtles* or *Paſtors* and *Private Chriſtians*.

This great truth being thus ſo firmly eſtabliſhed, there are a few Corollaries, I ſhall juſt name as reſulting from it, which I ſhall rather Hint, than inſiſt upon, having already been too long in clearing and aſſerting this much neglected Point of the Auditors of this Sermon on the Mount.

1. Then, let this direct us in our Interpretation of the whole Sermon; and it will ſave us from diverſe errors Interpreters have run upon, both in their Commentaries and Controverſies. There are ſeveral things the Church of *Rome* appropriates to the Clergy; or to the Monaſtick Orders: And ſeveral things Enthuſiaſts miſtake, by extending them to the Magiſtrates Office; all which errors might be avoided, by remembring what has been now ſo fully proved, that the Perſons properly inſtructed in this Sermon are *Private Chriſtians*; and that neither the Magiſtrates, nor Paſtors Office nor any other particular relation of Men is here touched or deſcribed.

(*a*) Mat. 6. 16. (*b*) Mat. 6. 7. (*c*) Mat. 6. 32.

2. From

2. From this Doctrine it will follow that there is no Duty here injoined, which the private Chriſtian may creep out of; there is no ſuch Gap to be opened, as if there were any part of this Sermon not binding upon all Private Chriſtians, as ſuch.

3. From hence we may obſerve the great perfection of the Chriſtian Morals, far beyond what ever the World was Taught before; and I am ſure very far beyond what is practiſed by Chriſtians at this Day. Let this be well conſidered, and let our Lives be new modelled by this excellent Scheme; and then it will appear what a Beautiful thing Chriſtianity is, and how neceſſary it is that we be exhorted, that our *Converſation be ſuch as becomes the Goſpel.*

4. If any thing is to be inferred with Relation to the *twelve choſen Diſciples*, who (if this be the ſame Sermon with that in St. *Luke*) were before the Sermon ſeparated from the reſt, and aſſumed into *Chriſt*'s Family, there to be fitted for the Office of Apoſtleſhip; to which they were afterwards called out: If any thing, I ſay, is to be inferred with relation to them, I think it is this, that it is neceſſary that Men be firſt inſtructed to be good Chriſtians, before they be ſent out upon the Office of the Miniſtry.

5. There is one thing I will venture to infer further from what I have ſaid of this Sermon, compared with that in *St. Luke*; namely, that tho' I will not

be poſitive in deciding whether they be one and the ſame Sermon once preached; that being no way needful to my Hypotheſis, which either way ſtands upon very firm Foundations; Yet thus much I will readily grant, that there is ſuch an apparent affinity between them, that I ſhall not venture to Interpret any Doctrines in the one, in a ſenſe Diverſe or different from the other; (as I find a learned Intepreter, (*a*) to whom I have been very much beholding in many things, thinks we may do) but ſhall think my ſelf Obliged to Illuſtrate the one by the other, and to reconcile them as carefully as we would the Words of any honeſt Author ſpeaking at ſeveral times on the ſame Subject.

With theſe Poſtulata, which I think are very clear, I ſhall now ſet about the Explication, firſt of the *Beatitudes*; and then if God ſpare me Life and Health, of the reſt of the Sermon on the Mount: for which let us humbly implore his Aid and Aſſiſtance. May he bleſs what we have heard: And to him, *Father, Son and Holy, be all Praiſe.*

(*a*) *Dr.* Whitby.

AN

APPENDIX

Wherein a late Opinion of a very Learned Perſon on Mat. vi. 25, &c. *interpreting that Part of the Sermon on the Mount as peculiar to the Apoſtles, is conſidered.*

HAving in the two former Diſcourſes proved that by the Word *Diſciples* in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, are meant Chriſtians in general; and that the whole enſuing Sermon on the Mount is deſigned and addreſſed to the Private Chriſtian; and this being one of the main Foundations upon which my Interpretation of it is built; it is with no ſmall Concern that I find this Doctrine oppoſed by a late moſt eminent Author, by whoſe excellent Labours the Church has been ſingularly obliged. But this being the Misfortune of Great Men's Errors, that their Name giving them Authority, they become more dangerous than the Errors

of

of meaner Men; and this Opinion appearing to me to be of very dangerous Conſequence, not only as ſuperſeding a conſiderable Part of the private Chriſtian's Duty contained in the 6th Chapter of St. *Matthew*; but as opening a Gap for him to creep out of the whole Sermon on the Mount, as *not being intended* (if that Opinion prevails) *for a General and Standing Rule to all Chriſtians*; I beg Pardon of all the Friends of that moſt deſerving Author, while I ſhew that he was miſtaken in his Opinion of thoſe Texts; and I hope I have ſome Reaſon to believe he himſelf was ſenſible of it; and in a poſterior Work gave a much ſounder Interpretation of them; as I ſhall ſhew in the end of this Diſpute. And therefore I wiſh they who had the Care of his Papers, and Printed his poſthumous Works, had thought fit to ſuppreſs this new Opinion, of which I come now to give an Account.

That great Author in the Third Volume of his Poſthumous Works, *Pag.* 116. in his Sermons againſt Covetouſneſs has a very particular Interpretation of ſome Expreſſions in this Sermon on the Mount; for he makes them firſt to be very extraordinary Duties, ſuch as he himſelf confeſſes would be unreaſonable, if they were now enjoined to ordinary Chriſtians; and then for that very Reaſon makes them peculiar to *the Apoſtles*. The Expreſſions he mentions are firſt that of *Taking no Thought for our Life what we ſhall eat, or what we ſhall drink, nor for the Body what we ſhall put on*, Mat. vi. 25. where he is of Opinion that

that our Saviour forbids all Care even about the Neceſſaries of Life, Meat, Drink and Cloathing. The ſecond Expreſſion he mentions is at Verſes 26, & 28, where we are commanded to *Behold the Fowls of the Air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns; yet our Heavenly Father feedeth them; and to conſider the Lilies of the Field, how they grow, they toil not neither do they ſpin*; in which Words he is of Opinion, that the Perſons to whom theſe Precepts are given, *are commanded to depend on the Providence of God for Food and Raiment, and to uſe no more Induſtry for the obtaining them, than the Fowls of the Air do, or the Lilies of the Field*, which he implies to be none at all. He confeſſes, as I ſaid, that *theſe Precepts would be very unreaſonable, had our Saviour given them as ſtanding and ordinary Rules to all Chriſtians*, as certainly they would, if underſtood in that Senſe: But this unreaſonableneſs he ſalves thus; by opening I think a great Gap; and venting an odd and dangerous Opinion, namely that *this Diſcourſe of our Saviour's was not intended for a General and Standing Rule to all Chriſtians, but only deſigned for his Diſciples*, (by whom he means *the Apoſtles*) *to take them off from all Care about the Things of this Life, that they might attend upon his Perſon, and wholly give up themſelves to that Work to which he had called them.* Now if we enquire what it was that drove this Great Man to this hard Shift, of giving

giving up the Sermon on the Mount, (or at leaſt this Part of it) as not intended for a General and ſtanding Rule to all Chriſtians; we ſhall find it there, that it was only that he apprehended it to be the Scope and Deſign of our Saviour's Diſcourſe in that Place, to oblige his Diſciples literally to follow the Pattern *of the Fowls of the Air, and the Lilies of the Field, which are ſufficiently provided for without any Care and Induſtry of theirs:* But if there be no Neceſſity to put ſuch a Senſe on the Words, and if they will very well bear one much more commodious, without running us upon ſuch a deſperate Shift, then all this I hope will go for nothing; and the Precepts here, as well as thoſe in all the other Parts of this Sermon on the Mount, will be ſtill a General and Standing Rule to all Chriſtians.

For opening the right Senſe, I deſire it may be obſerved in the firſt Place that theſe Expreſſions *Behold the Fowls of the Air, and conſider the Lilies of the Field*, are not new Precepts; but only Arguments to enforce the Precept going before of *taking no Thought for our Life, what we ſhall eat, or what we ſhall drink, nor yet for our Body what we ſhall put on.* Let any one attentively conſider the Text, this is the Precept μὴ μεριμνᾶτε; it is but ill rendered (*a*) *Take no Thought*; it ſhould be,

(*a*) Mat. 6. 25.

Be

Be not anxious, or *ſolicitous*, or *over thoughtful*; and indeed all Commentators have hitherto interpreted it in this Senſe. This Precept is immediately backed with ſeveral Reaſons or Arguments to enforce it, as 1. (*a*) *Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment?* 2. The Example of *the Fowls of the Air*, (*b*) which tho' they are not furniſhed with ſo good regular Helps as we Men (for they can neither ſow, nor reap, nor gather into Barns, all which we can do) are yet provided for by God's Providence; (*c*) in which we are much better than they, or we have the better of them. 3. The unprofitableneſs of this Anxiety; (*d*) *Which of you by taking Thought can add one Cubit to his Stature?* 4. The Example of the (*e*) Lilies, which without either the Field-labour, or Houſe-labour, (both which we are capable of) are yet ſo nobly cloathed. 5. (*f*) The ſmall Worth of theſe Flowers which flouriſh to Day, and are burnt or diſtilled to Morrow; whereas we are of greater Dignity. 6. That after all thoſe Things (*g*) the *Gentiles* ſeek, who believe nothing of a Providence. 7. That God will provide, knowing that we want all theſe Things. (*h*) 8. That Life in all the Parts of it has ſo many Troubles, that we need not anticipate them; (*i*) from all which Arguments the ſame Concluſion againſt Anxiety is diſtinctly drawn by our Saviour in that Diſcourſe, *v.* 31, & 34. *There-*

(*a*) Mat. 6. 25. (*b*) 26. (*c*) Ibid. (*d*) Ibid. (*e*) *v.* 27, 28. (*f*) *v.* 30. (*g*) *v.* 32. (*h*) Ibid. (*i*) *v.* 34.

fore

fore take no Thought, &c. which ſhews they are but Arguments.

The Text being thus opened, from whence it appears that this of *Beholding the Fowls of the Air*, as to our Eating and Drinking; and *Conſidering the Lilies of the Field* as to Raiment, are only Motives and Reaſons to back the Precept againſt Anxiety: I deſire *2dly* it may be further obſerved almoſt of all theſe Arguments, that they are Arguments *a fortiori*, concluding not barely from a parity of Reaſon, but that there is much more Reaſon that we ſhould be clear of Anxiety, than the Things mentioned; and ſo generally either in the Argument, or the Concluſion, the Reaſoning is plainly gathered a *Fortiori*. *Is not the Life* more than Meat, *and the Body than Raiment? Are ye not* much better than they? Or have ye not much the better of them? *They ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns*, and therefore not comparable to you who can do all this. Now here then is a very eaſy Senſe of the Words, as if our Saviour had ſaid, What Reaſon have ye to be anxious and ſolicitous, or diſtruſtful of Providence? Other Creatures not ſo well able regularly to provide for themſelves, are yet taken Care of without Anxiety, and live merry chearful Lives, *as the Birds and Fowls of the Air, which can neither ſow, nor reap, nor gather into Barns, all which ye can do*; Why ſhould ye be more diſtruſtful and anxious than they? Here I ſay

is

is a very commodious Senſe of theſe Words, without being driven to ſuch Extremity.

But leſt the deſerved Authority of this great and learned Man ſhould carry it for his Expoſition, I will over and above the ſuggeſting the right Senſe, briefly vindicate this Text from this new Interpretation, by ſhewing ſeveral Defects in it, from which it will plainly appear that there is no Manner of Ground for it; and conſequently that our Aſſertion holds good, that all the Duties of this Sermon, are enjoined to all Chriſtians, and none of them limited to Apoſtles.

1 Then, that the Duty here enjoined μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν τί φάγητε καὶ τί πίητε, which we render, *Take no Thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink*; was not peculiar to the *Apoſtles*, is plain from St. *Paul's* recommending it to private Chriſtians, *Ph.* iv. 6. Μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, which we render *Be careful for nothing*: and if for nothing, then certainly not for Food and Raiment, which was our Saviour's Precept. St. *Peter* doth the ſame, 1 *Pet.* v. 7 *Caſting all your Care upon him for he careth for you*; the ſame Argument which our Saviour uſes againſt the ſame μέριμνα or *anxious Care* in this Place; *for your Heavenly Father*, ſays he, *knoweth that ye have need of all theſe Things*; and the ſame thing which our Saviour condemns in the Parable of the Sower, *Mat.* xiii. 22. as a common Vice incident to all Hearers. *He*, ſays he, *That received Seed among the Thorns, is*

is he that heareth the Word; and the Care of this World, ἡ μέριμνα τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, *and the Deceitfulneſs of Riches choak the Word, and he becometh unfruitful.* In the *New Teſtament* Style, this is an uſual Deſcription of *Covetouſneſs*, and the inordinate Cares of the World; a Vice than which there is none more cautioned againſt by the ſacred Writers, in the whole Catalogue of Vices.

2. Let it be conſidered that in the Context, which is all a Diſſuaſive from Covetouſneſs, beginning *Chap.* vi. 19. and continuing for ſixteen *Verſes* together, to the end of the *Chapter*; the other Precepts both before and after are all Univerſal, belonging to all Chriſtians; *Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures upon Earth, but lay up for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven: Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe Things ſhall be added unto you,* &c. And are ſo interpreted even by this great Author himſelf. Now how improbable is it, that this of *taking no Thought* in the middle of the ſame very Diſcourſe, and addreſſed to the ſame Perſons muſt be limited to Apoſtles, more than the reſt?

3. But further, if the immediate Connexion is obſerved, all Limitation is expreſly excluded; for this Precept of *taking no Thought* is an Inference drawn from another general Obſervation relating to all Mankind, *v.* 24. **No Man** *can ſerve two Maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one and deſpiſe the other,* **Ye** *cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Is this ſaid only to *Apoſtles?*

It

It follows immediately; **Therefore** *I say unto you, take no Thought for your Life*, &c. Now if this is a plain Conſequence, from that other Doctrine, that **No Man** *can ſerve two Maſters*, deduced by our Saviour himſelf with an *Ergo*; **Therefore I ſay unto you**; the Concluſion will hold as general as the Premiſſes, and ſo extend to all Mankind.

4. Further that this Doctrine belongs to all Chriſtians, and not only to Apoſtles, is plain from another Argument our Saviour uſes, *v.* 32. where after repeating the very ſame Precept, of *taking no Thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat? Or what ſhall we drink? Or wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed?* it follows, *For after all theſe Things* **do the Heathen or the Gentiles** ſeek. Now which is moſt probable, that the Antitheſis to *the Heathen* here, are **Chriſtians**, or only *Apoſtles?* And indeed

5. In general, It is a great Demonſtration to me that our Saviour intended not this Duty to be limited to *Apoſtles*; but to be extended to all Chriſtians; becauſe of the many Arguments he makes Uſe of to preſs it, I obſerve there is not one taken from the Apoſtolical Function; but from ſuch Conſiderations as are equally binding either upon all *Mankind*, or at leaſt upon all *Chriſtians*. Such as theſe, *That the Life is more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment*; That *we are better than the Fowls*; That *by taking Thought we can't add one Cubit unto our Stature*; That *God will much more cloath us than the worthleſs Lilies which grow to*

Day,

Day, and to Morrow are cast into the Still or Furnace; That *after all these earthly Things the Gentiles seek*; That *our Heavenly Father knows that we have need of all these Things*; That *if we seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, all these Things shall be superadded:* And that *the Future will bring Cares and Troubles enough along with it*, and *the Present has enough already, and therefore they ought not to be anticipated.*

6. I believe it will always be found that whenever the Word μέριμνα, which signifies the height of Care and Concern, is joined with any Worldly thing, it is taken for a vice in whatever Persons it is found, and therefore is not to be forbid to *Apostles* only, but to all other Men. It is such a vice that our Saviour joins it with *Surfeiting and Drunkenness*, Luke xxi. 34. *Take heed to your Selves*, says he, *lest at any time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness*, and cares of this Life.

7. To think that all, even moderate and regular Care, was forbid to *Apostles*, is *gratis dictum*, there is no Ground that I can see, in any part of the *New Testament* for such an assertion; for in that first Commission of theirs, which looks most like it, *Mat.* x. 9. tho' they were not to provide *two Coats* (that is change of Raiment) nor more than one pair of Shoes, and one Staff; and were promised that the Gospel Labourer should find meat; yet some moderate Care it would require to provide these few Necessaries: And afterwards we find that where People were

were not careful to ſupply them, (*a*) ſome of them ſupplyed both their own and their fellow Travellers neceſſities, out of their own Induſtry and handy Labour.

8. Whereas our Learned Author fixes the Compariſon taken from the *Fowls of the Air* in this Point, that *they are ſufficiently provided for, without any care and Induſtry of theirs*, which has indeed led him into this New Opinion; I deſire it may be conſidered whether the Simile is not wrong placed: For *the Birds and Fowls of the Air*, though they are good Examples of a Light and merry Heart, and conſequently good Patterns of a freedom from Anxiety; for which end they are here Introduced; and ſo much the more proper Patterns of it, becauſe they are not furniſhed with ſuch Forecaſt and Ingenioufneſs as we Men are Maſters of, to help to provide for their own Subſiſtence, for *they can neither Sow nor Reap nor gather into Barns*, all which we can and may do: Which makes it an excellent Simile *a fortiori*; Yet it is a miſtake to think that they employ no Pains or Induſtry, towards their own Subſiſtence; On the contrary they are very Nimble, Diligent and Induſtrious, and take abundance of Pains to look out and gather up the proper Food of Worms, Inſects, Wild

(*a*) Acts 20. 34.

Fruits, Seeds and Grain, or whatever ſuits their Natures, both for Themſelves and their Young; And therefore there is not any Reaſon from this Similitude to condemn lawful Care and Providence in any Men, though there is to condemn Anxiety in all Men, as well as *Apoſtles*.

I have ſaid enough I think to confute this new Notion, that the Duty enjoined againſt *taking thought* is to be limited to the *Twelve choſen Diſciples*. And therefore for all this Objection, with Reverence to that great Name which has deſerved ſo well of the Church, we may conclude, that all the Duties recommended in this Sermon, are Chriſtian Duties in general, and not any of them limited to *Apoſtles*.

And indeed though this Great Author argues this his Opinion at large, I am apt to think he was of another Mind before his Death; for in a Poſterior Volume (whether the Diſcouſe was of a prior or Poſterior Compoſition I know not) I find he gives a much ſounder Senſe of the Texts, concerning which we have been diſputing. It is *Vol.* 7. *page* 44. Where after quoting the ſame Texts, Mat. 6. *Behold the Fowls of the Air*, &c. on another Account, he has this judicious Remark, which I will ſet down in his own Words, "*Our* "*Saviour uſeth theſe Arguments*, ſays he, *to his* "*Diſciples, to convince them of the Providence of* "*God towards them*, As MEN, *and of a more*

"*excel-*

" *lent Nature than other Creatures.* And if this be ſpoke to them As MEN, it is to be underſtood in a Senſe applicable to all Men, and not to be limited to *Apoſtles*, which is the very thing I am contending for.

SERMON IV.

MAT. V. 3.

Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

HAVING in my former Diſcourſes, from the firſt two Verſes of this Chapter, obſerved that this Sermon on the Mount was deſigned for all Chriſtians in general; and that it aims at the undeceiving Men in the Carnal and Worldly Notions and Expectations they had of the Kingdom of *the Meſſiah*; and at the rectifying the bad Diſpoſitions of Mind they were under, occaſioned by thoſe Carnal Notions and Expectations; this, if we carry it along with us in our Minds and Memories, will ſerve as *a Key* to open and unlock the meaning of many Expreſſions and Paſſages in the Sermon itſelf; particularly

ticularly this *firſt* that I have now read, which has ſtrangely exerciſed the Conjectures of Interpreters. *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven:* Which I underſtand, as if he had ſaid, Ye are now full of Expectations that the *Meſſiah* is about to enter upon his Kingdom, and ſo he is; The Moſaical State is now near an end, and the Evangelical State or the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom is at hand; but I muſt tell you freely, ye are in a very bad Diſpoſition of Heart and Mind for it; and therefore to prepare you for that Kingdom of *the Meſſiah*, I will acquaint you who are the happy Perſons that ſhall be admitted into it; for they are quite another Sort of Men than ye think, or are aware of. Firſt, ye fancy that there is a vaſt deal of Wealth, Power, and Worldly Grandeur to be acquired under *the Meſſiah*; and accordingly your Hearts are full of the moſt Covetous and Ambitious Expectations that Men can have; for ye expect no leſs than to ſhare the Wealth and Government of the World among you; and that is what ye are now in your Hearts eagerly graſping after: But ye are extremely miſtaken; the Happy Perſons who ſhall be admitted into the Kingdom of *the Meſſiah*, muſt be of a quite contrary Temper and Diſpoſition; for as that Kingdom will not be of this World, ſo the Hearts and Minds of the Subjects of it, muſt be diſengaged from the World, and ſet on Heaven; for they, and none but they, are fit for that Heavenly State and Kingdom. This I take to be the true

Meaning and Importance of the Words. But for the further clearing of it, and impreſſing a Senſe of it upon our Spirits, I ſhall in them diſtinctly conſider theſe three Things.

1. Who are meant here by the Happy Perſons called *The Poor in Spirit?*

2. What by *The Kingdom of Heaven?*

3. How the Kingdom of Heaven is *Theirs?* Or what a neceſſary Preparation and Diſpoſition this *Poverty in Spirit* is both for the Evangelical, and the Heavenly State?

I. We are to conſider who are meant here by thoſe Happy Perſons, called *The Poor in Spirit? Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit.* I think I have juſt now given the plain and natural Account of this in my Paraphraſe of the Words; when I told you that by the *Poor in Spirit*, I underſtand them, whoſe Hearts and Minds are diſengaged from the World, and ſet on Heaven. This is the true Spirit of Poverty, which was ſo much wanting both in their Notions of, and in their Affections and Diſpoſitions towards the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom. This *Spirit of Poverty*, as I take it, ſtands in Oppoſition both to a Spirit of Covetouſneſs, and to a Spirit of Ambition: And ſo if rightly underſtood, will in ſome Senſe reconcile the two different Interpretations of *Poverty*

and

and *Humility*, which Expoſitors have given of the *Poor in Spirit*, in this Text. For a great many Interpreters both Ancient and Modern by *The Poor in Spirit* teach us to underſtand *the Humble*; but I could never find that the Original Word properly ſignified *humble*; they quote indeed a Paſſage of *Iſaiah* lxvi. 2. where as they think, *Poor* and *Humble* are joined together. *To this Man will I look (ſaith the Lord) even to him that is Poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* From which Paſſage they might as well prove that it ſignifies *Penitent*, as *Humble*. I confeſs I could never reſt ſatisfied in that Interpretation, or find out how theſe Words *Poor in Spirit* ſignified *Humble* in their principal Senſe, though by Conſequence they will imply the ſame thing, as I ſhall preſently ſhew, after I have cleared up my Reaſons for making the other the Principal and Literal Senſe of the Words. Which in ſhort are theſe two. 1. The Original Word πτωχὸς, which we render *Poor*, is always ſo rendred throughout the whole *New Teſtament*, and never once *Humble*; and every one who underſtands the *Greek* Language, knows that *Poor* is the true proper Signification of that Word; Nor can I ſee any Reaſon to change the *Proper* into a *Metaphorical* Signification in this Place. 2. St. *Luke* who repeats the Subſtance of this Sermon, and begins with the ſame Beatitude, *Luke* vi. 20. inſtead of ſaying *Poor in Spirit* (which is the Expreſſion, upon which this Interpretation of *Humility* is built;) hath only the

Word *Poor*; *Bleſſed be ye Poor*: And not only ſo; but after he has done with his Beatitudes, he reckons up ſeveral *Woes*, as oppoſite to the ſeveral *Beatitudes* he had mentioned; and the firſt *Wo* ſet oppoſite to the firſt *Beatitude*, is *Wo unto you that are Rich*; which to me ſeems to put the thing beyond Diſpute, and to evince that the Word both here and in St. *Luke*, is to be taken in the plain and ordinary Senſe, and is not by any Metaphore to be drawn to another Signification, as if it meant *the Humble*, or indeed any thing elſe but *the Poor*, or ſuch as have not their Portion in this Life.

But how then? Are all Poor People happy, and all Rich Men miſerable? Is the Kingdom of Heaven beſtowed on Men, or denied to them on Account of ſome Difference of their Outward State and Condition, without any Conſideration of the inward Temper of their Minds, and Diſpoſition of their Hearts and Souls? And ſo for obtaining a Share in the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* is there nothing requiſite, as to this Beatitude, but that we abandon Wealth and Riches, and take upon us a voluntary Poverty, making our ſelves deſtitute of the Comforts and Conveniences of Life? For anſwering this Objection; as I have made uſe of St. *Luke*, for clearing the Meaning of St. *Matthew*, againſt ſuch as would altogether exclude Poverty from the Bleſſing here pronounced; ſo I muſt again make uſe of St. *Matthew* for clearing this Doubt, which ariſes chiefly from St. *Luke*'s more compendious Relation of

of this Part of our Saviour's Diſcourſe. That we may know then that the *Bleſſing* doth not belong to all that are *Outwardly Poor*, nor the Imprecation to all that are *Outwardly Rich*, St. *Matthew* here ſays, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit*; that is, Bleſſed are they who have withdrawn *their Minds, Hearts and Affections* from this World; and have them ſet on Heaven: So that if they are outwardly Poor, they are contented; and if outwardly Rich, they ſet not their Hearts upon their Riches, but are Humble and Modeſt; and diligent Seekers of God, and beſtow their Wealth freely for the Services of Piety, Charity, Neceſſity, Hoſpitality, Conveniency; or whatſoever Occaſions do offer for the Service of God or our Neighbour; as freely indeed, as if it had no Place or Room in their Hearts at all. This is no conſtrained, but a very natural Senſe; that they who do not treaſure up the World in their Hearts, or ſet not their Hearts on the World, ſhould be *The Poor in Spirit*; for they neither admire nor ſeek after great Things in this World; and if it is their Fortune to poſſeſs a great Eſtate, by their whole Conduct and Behaviour they ſhew that their Heart is not ſet upon it. Theſe are *the Poor in Spirit*, whatever be their outward State and Condition in this World. So that the Bleſſing here pronounced, and the contrary wo implied, belongs to no Man conſidered only as in an high or low, rich or poor outward Condition in the World; but both to the one and t'other, according as their Hearts and

and Spirits do cleave to worldly Things, or are weaned from them. All that are poor in Purſe are not poor in Spirit; (*a*) for many of *them* do inwardly *enlarge their Deſire as Hell*, and are full of Covetous and Ambitious Aims and Projects; and their Hearts cleave as much to the World, as if their chief Felicity conſiſted in the Poſſeſſion of it. So on the other hand it is poſſible for a Man to enjoy a plentiful Portion of the World, and to be Rich in his outward State and Condition, and yet to ſet his Heart ſo little on theſe Things, and to have his Soul ſo weaned from them, that he may be truly ſaid to be *Poor in Spirit*, tho' he is outwardly Rich, and ſo to have a Right and Title to the Bleſſing here pronounced.

So much for the Deſcription of *the Poor in Spirit*; from which we may ſee, though it is not properly *Humility*, but *a Spirit of Poverty*, which is here directly meant, yet *Humility* will likewiſe fall in with this Deſcription; at leaſt no Man can be poſſeſſed of this Spirit of Poverty; but at the ſame time he muſt be poſſeſſed of Humility. For as Poverty in Spirit denotes an Heart delivered from the inordinate love of Riches; the ſame bleſſed Temper, wherever it is, cuts off the Sinews of Pride, at leaſt that ſort of Pride, which feeds on thoſe outward Things, that the covetous Mind

(*a*) Hab. 2. 5.

ſeeks

ſeeks after. For let us put the caſe in a Man outwarly Poor, or outwardly Rich, which you pleaſe, provided he be *Poor in Spirit* as we have deſcribed; and we ſhall find ſtill a great deal of Humility neceſſarily annexed to this Virtue: If the Perſon is outwardly Poor, this poverty in Spirit, making him contented with his Fortune and Circumſtances, cuts off all eager deſires of Climbing to ſatisfy *Ambition*, as well as of Scraping to ſatisfy *Covetouſneſs*. So that a Spirit of *Humility*, and a Spirit of *Poverty* in ſuch a Man go Hand in Hand together. Again if the Perſon is outwardly Rich, this Poverty in Spirit keeping him from ſetting his Heart on his Riches, doth by that very thing cure him of that Pride and Vanity, which commonly attends Wealth and Greatneſs; and likewiſe of that ſupercilious Contempt of, and looking down upon his poor Neighbours, which is ſo incident to unſanctified Wealth. His Heart being weaned from his Wealth, he has no more left to elevate him from the conſideration of his Fortune than if he had it not: And conſequently he is as modeſt and humble, as affable and courteous, as ſenſible of the vanity of the World, and the uncertainty of Riches, in ſhort as free from Pride, as the pooreſt Man living. Thus, as I ſaid before, by the right Notion of this Spirit of Poverty the two different Opinions concerning the meaning of this *Beatitude* may eaſily be reconciled; namely that which places it in *Humility*; and that which places it in *a Spirit of Poverty*,

Poverty, or an Heart weaned from the World; tho' this laſt ſeems to me much more agreeable to the proper and literal Notion of the Words, aud therefore I inſiſt moſt upon it.

II. I proceed next to what I propoſed to conſider in the *Second* place; namely what is to be meant here by *the Kingdom of Heaven*. In general, the moſt common Notion of *the Kingdom of God*, or *Kingdom of Heaven*, which are both one in the *New Teſtament*, is the Spiritual *Kingdom* of the *Meſſiah*; or that Evangelical State and Government of the Church, which the *Meſſiah* was to ſet up, with all the benefits and priviledges of Grace and Glory annexed to it; which ſhall be beſtowed on them who by Faith in him become true Members of this Kingdom, and are governed by his Laws. And therefore the meaning of the Words in this Place; *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, I underſtand, as if our Lord had ſaid; They are the fitteſt Perſons to be admitted Members of *Chriſt*'s Church Militant on Earth, and of his Church Triumphant in Heaven. This is the general Notion of the *Kingdom of God*, or *the Kingdom of Heaven*, in the *New Teſtament*; though according to the various coherence and connexion of the Words, by that expreſſion is ſometimes denoted the Admittance of Chriſtians into the Chruch, and ſometimes their Conſummation in Glory: And ſometimes both, as I believe in this Place.

III. The

III. The third and laſt thing I propoſed to conſider is how this Kingdom of Heaven is *Theirs?* Or what a neceſſary Preparation and Diſpoſition this *Poverty in Spirit* is for the Evangelical State here, and Eternal Happineſs hereafter? In order to this there are two Things I think to offer to your Conſideration.

1. To ſhew that it was ſo in Fact, that the Chriſtian Church, who were the Members or Subjects of this Kingdom, was made up of ſuch Perſons, whoſe Hearts, and Minds were moſt diſengaged from the World.

2. To ſhew from the Inconſiſtency of the Worldly Spirit, and the Spirit of the Goſpel, that none but *The Poor in Spirit*, are capable of either the Kingdom of Grace here, or the Kingdom of Glory hereafter.

1. That it was ſo in fact, that the Chriſtian Church was made up of ſuch Perſons, whoſe Hearts and Minds were moſt diſengaged from the World. *Hearken my beloved Brethren* ſaith St. James ii. 5. *Hath not God choſen the Poor of this World, Rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promiſed to them that love Him?* and our Lord himſelf obſerves to *John Baptiſt's Diſciples*, Luke vii. 22. that it was *the Poor who were Evangelized*; not only *had the Goſpel preached to them*; as we render the Word: But were duly affected, and wrought upon, and brought over by the preaching of the Goſpel. Thus the great Men make their boaſt,

boaſt, John vii. 48. *Have any of the Rulers or of the Phariſees believed on him? But this People which knoweth not the Law are curſed,* And St. *Paul* ſays very appoſitely to this purpoſe. 1. Cor. i. 26. *For ye ſee your Calling Brethren, how that not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called; but God hath choſen the fooliſh Things of the World to confound the Wiſe, and God hath choſen the weak Things of the World to confound the Things that are Mighty; and baſe Things of the World, and Things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are.* The People that ſtood moſt out againſt our Saviour and his Doctrine, were the great and rich Men, who were moſt eagerly bent upon the World. (a) *They went away after their Farms and their Merchandiſe,* as it is in the Parable, and would not Mind the Goſpel invitation. Nay of thoſe who were *Chriſt*'s *Diſciples* ſeveral forſook him, when they found it was not *an Earthly*, but *an Heavenly Kingdom* to which he invited them. And particularly we have the Hiſtory of one Young Man *Mat.* xix. 22. who choſe rather to leave *Chriſt* than his Poſſeſſions; ſince he could not keep both. And indeed this is the true Account why he was rejected by the *Jewiſh* Church, becauſe he appear'd not in that Wealth and worldly Grandeur they expected.

(a) Mat. 22. 5.

How

How little there was of this Worldly Spirit among the firſt Chriſtians we may gueſs not only from their (*b*) *Taking chearfully the ſpoiling of their* Goods at the Hands of their Enemies, but from their ſo generouſly ſelling their Eſtates, and (*c*) *Laying down the Price at the Apoſtles Feet*, that Diſtribution might be made to every one of their Chriſtian Brethren, according as they had need. And I do not remember any one that crept in among them poſſeſſed with a worldly Spirit, except *Judas* who ſold his Maſter for Money; and *Ananias and Sapphira*, who, as I conjecture, joined themſelves to the Chriſtian Church, only or chiefly that they might be entitled to a liberal Proviſion out of the Common Stock, though they had a ſecret Reſerve of their own Eſtate, which they thought to have enjoyed unknown to the reſt. And how fatal this Spirit proved to theſe Three, ye know from the Hiſtory. It is true in the beginning, this worldly Spirit was very much among them all, as appears from their frequent Diſputes who ſhould be greateſt in *Chriſt*'s Kingdom: But it was always corrected by our Lord; and at laſt perfectly cured by his Aſcenſion into Heaven, and the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt. So much for the Fact; that the Chriſtian Church was made up of ſuch Members, whoſe Hearts and Minds were diſengaged from the World.

(*a*) Heb. 10. 34. (*b*) Act. 4. 34.

2. In the next place I am to ſhew, from the Inconſiſtency of the worldly Spirit, and the Spirit of the Goſpel, that none but *the Poor in Spirit* were capable of either the Kingdom of Grace here, or the Kingdom of Glory hereafter. Our Saviour has told us how impoſſible it is to (*a*) *ſerve God and Mammon*. And if he had not ſaid it, the Inconſiſtency of theſe two Services, would quickly Demonſtrate the ſame thing. For beſides the many Chriſtian Precepts concerning the Love of God with all our Hearts, Self denial, Contentment, Heavenly-mindedneſs, Rendring to all their Dues, Brotherly love, Charity even to Enemies, Bearing the Croſs, and many other moſt directly contrary to this worldly Spirit, which hold the principal Place in the Chriſtian Morals; I do not ſee how the very Profeſſion of Chriſtianity could in thoſe bleſſed Days have been complyed with, without laying aſide that worldly Spirit; for the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, as I obſerved juſt now, expoſed them on the one Hand to the ſpoiling of their Goods, which was very often their Lot; and if they could not have complyed with it, they muſt have quit the Profeſſion, as well as the Practice of Chriſtianity, and with the Young Man in the Goſpel (*b*) *have gone away Sorrowful*; or if Perſecution had ſpared them at the Hands of their Enemies, they could

(*a*) Mat. 6. 24. (*b*) Mat. 19. 22.

not

not have come off ſo well at the Hands of their Friends; very large Charities being expected from them, at a time, when their Brethren ſold all, and brought all in to the Common Stock. (*a*) At ſuch a time if the Chriſtian Profeſſors in this Life only had had hope, of all Men certainly they had been the moſt miſerable. (*b*) So that there was a very near connexion between this Spirit of Poverty, and the Kingdom of both Grace and Glory. To have pleaſed theſe worldly ſpirited Men there muſt have been an *Earthly*, inſtead of an *Heavenly Kingdom*, and a Conquering, inſtead of a ſuffering Saviour, and a Carnal Mahometan, inſtead of the Chriſtian Religion. This then our Saviour might well lay down as a firſt Fundamental of Chriſtian Morals, (as great a paradox as it was to them who were filled with worldly Expectations from the *Meſſiah*) that *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Thus now I have explained this firſt *Beatitude*. It remains only that we make Application of what hath been ſaid, every one of us to his own Heart and Life; for it concerns us no leſs than our ſhare and Intereſt in *Chriſt*'s Kingdom of Grace here, and Glory hereafter, to make ſure of this firſt Character of a good Chriſtian; namely that our Hearts be diſentangled from the Love, Cares, Fears, Troubles, Anxieties and Concerns of the World, and ſet

(*a*) Acts 4. 34. (*b*) 1. Cor. 15. 19.

on Heaven. And to help you to a ſhort Trial of your Hearts in this particular, whether they are ſo diſengaged from the World or not, I ſhall very briefly propoſe to you ſome certain Marks and Evidences whereby ye may know your Hearts in this matter, and ſo have done.

1. *Firſt* then, aſſure your ſelves ye have not yet learned this *Poverty in Spirit*, if ye love the World ſo well, (*a*) as to allow your ſelves to acquire it by any unjuſt, diſhoneſt, or ſinful means: Such as Pilfering, Stealing, Lying, Equivocating, Fraud, falſe Inſinuations, Oppreſſion, Exaction, Bribery, falſe Accounts, falſe Weights and Meaſures, Deceitful Making or Packing of Commodities, ſlight or untrue Working; or any other way that is either unjuſt, baſe or diſhonourable in it ſelf; or injurious to our Neighbour.

2. YE are far from this Chriſtian *Spirit of Poverty*, (*b*) if ye are of a narrow, pinching, penurious Temper; and love the World ſo well as to grudge to beſtow upon your Selves, and Wives and Children, and Servants, and Friends, the neceſſaries and conveniencies of Life, ſuitable to your Duty, Eſtate and Circumſtances.

3. YE are far from this *Poverty in Spirit*, and diſengagement from the World; if ye ſuffer your (*c*) Minds to be ſo much cumbered and diverted with the cares of this Life, or with Anxiety for

(*a*) Pſalm 119. 36. (*b*) Heb. 13. 5. (*c*) Mat. 13. 22.

future

future wants, as to neglect your Devotions to God, or to let your worldly Cares and buſineſs eat out the Care of your Souls, and of a better Life.

4. YE are not ſo diſengaged from (*a*) the Love of the World as this *Poverty in Spirit* requires, if ye are not willing chearfully and readily, according to your Ability and the Opportunities God puts in your Hands, to do good, in works of Piety, and Charity to your Brethren and Neighbours in diſtreſs; and in promoting the Publick Good of the World, eſpecially that part of it where God has caſt your lot.

5. If we are thus inwardly diſengaged from the World, (*b*) we ſhall have a patient and chearful Contentment and Satisfaction with our own Circumſtances, be they ever ſo mean, without envying ſuch as are Greater and Wealthier than our ſelves.

6. We are far from this *Poverty in Spirit*, if we are ſtrongly reſolved, and eagerly bent to be Rich: If in our Hearts we graſp the World, and earneſtly wiſh and deſire it. *They that will be Rich* ſaith St. Paul 1. Tim. vi. 9. *Fall into temptation, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in deſtruction and perdition.*

7. We are ſtrangers to this *Poverty in Spirit*, if we are not contented to gain leaſurely and moderately; but make unreaſonable haſt to be Rich, for

(*a*) John 3. 17. (*b*) Phi. 4. 11.

that puts a Man upon many Siniſter courſes to come at it? *He that maketh haſt to be Rich ſhall not be innocent*; ſaith *Solomon*, that is, by a common μείωσις ſhall be a great Knave. *Pro.* xxviii. 20.

8. We are far from this *Poverty in Spirit*, if we look upon our Wealth and Riches with too much complacency and delight; eſpecially if we place our truſt or confidence in them; like the rich Man in the Goſpel, (*a*) who delighted himſelf and truſted in his full Barns, and not in God.

9. It is a ſign that we are far from this *Poverty in Spirit*, when upon any great Loſs, or even Poverty it ſelf coming upon us, we are fretful, pieviſh and diſcontented; for if the World had not too deep root in our Hearts, we could eaſily part with it at Gods pleaſure. We could ſay with Holy Job. (*b*) *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the Name of the Lord:* Or with St. Paul. *I have learned in whatſoever State I am therewith to be content, I know both how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound: Every where and in all things I am inſtructed both to be full, and to be Hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need.* Phi. iv. 11, & 12.

10. It is a ſign we are ſtrangers to this *Poverty in Spirit*, if we ſet no bounds to our worldly Purchaſes, but go on if we are ever ſo rich ſcraping and gathering and heaping up, *in infinitum*. Whereas it is

(*a*) Luke 12. 19. (*b*) Job 1. 21.

certainly

certainly the duty of Rich Men to know when they have enough, and to put a ſtop to their Worldly Acquiſitions; and to be liberal in good Works with the Overplus. This I take to be St. *Pauls* Meaning. 1. Tim. vi. 18. where he gives a particular charge *to the Rich in this World. To do good, to be Rich in good Works, ready to diſtribute, willing to Communicate, laying up in Store for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the time to Come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life.*

11. *Laſtly*, It is a ſign that we are great ſtrangers to this *Poverty in Spirit*, if we are not ready to part with our worldly Eſtates, rather than betray our (*a*) Religion and Conſcience, by keeping them on ſinful Terms. It was often the lot of the Primitive Chriſtians, that they were obliged either to loſe all, or abandon their Chriſtian Profeſſion. And if ever it ſhould be our lot, as it ſometimes is in this World, that we muſt either quit a Place of Profit, or comply with ſinful Terms in keeping it; either loſe our Eſtate, or change our Religion, and quit a good conſcience; if we are truly diſengaged from the World, we ſhall count nothing dear to us ſo that we may win *Chriſt*: But ſhall take up our Croſs, and chearfully follow him, not only to Poverty, but to Bonds and Impriſonment, and to Death it Self. (*b*) *Looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was ſet before him endured the Croſs*

(*a*) Luke 18.23. (*b*) Heb. 12. 2.

and deſpiſed the Shame, and is now ſet down on the Right Hand of the Throne of God.

Ye may think perhaps ſome of theſe are hard Leſſons, and not well ſuited to our degenerate times of Chriſtianity; I can't help that; It is true they would be very hard, if we were thus to part with the World, without having ſome better thing in Exchange. But the promiſe in my Text of *the Kingdom of Heaven* is more than ſufficient to make up our loſs of the World. God give us Grace to believe this promiſe; and in the mean time to Live as Heirs of this Heavenly Kingdom, of which as we are admitted Members by Profeſſion, ſo God grant that in due time we may be likewiſe Partakers of the Glory and eternal Felicities of it, through the Mediation of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*. *To whom*, &c.

SER-

SERMON V.

MAT. V. 4.

Bleſſed are they that Mourn: for they ſhall be comforted.

FOR finding out the Meaning of this Beatitude, which ſounds harſh to Fleſh and Blood, it will be neceſſary to remember the general Obſervation I made from the Occaſion, Scope and Purport of this Sermon on the Mount; namely that our Lord is here undeceiving the People and his Diſciples, as to the wrong Notions they had of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, and correcting the bad Diſpoſitions and Preparations of their Minds for it: All which wrong Notions and Diſpoſitions flowed from this one πρῶτον ψεῦδος, or fundamental Error, that they expected the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* would be a great Worldly Kingdom,

flowing in Wealth, Honour, and Carnal Pleaſure; that it would gratify their Luſts and Paſſions to the utmoſt, and give them an Abſolute Victory and Conqueſt over all their own and their Country's Enemies. In this Sermon our Saviour advances ſuch Maxims as are the moſt directly contrary to theſe their erroneous Opinions, and the beſt levelled utterly to exſtirpate and root out of his Hearers Minds theſe bad Diſpoſitions of Heart and Practices of Life, which did ſo incapacitate them for his ſpiritual Kingdom and Service. We learned from the laſt Beatitude, how he pronounced a Bleſſing on them who had their Hearts and Minds diſengaged from the Wealth and Grandeur of the World. He comes now to undeceive them as to another of their Expectations from the ſame Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, in the worldly Notion they had of it, namely as to all ſort of Carnal Mirth and High Living; for no doubt as they expected a great deal of Wealth and Honour, they expected likewiſe all manner of Gratifications of their Luxury, Stately Houſes, Furniture and Equipage, Plentiful Tables, Mirth, Muſick and Drinking; they propoſed to themſelves a Life of the greateſt Jollity, Profuſeneſs and Merriment, and hated the Thoughts of Serioufneſs and Penitence. This is the evil Diſpoſition of their Minds our Saviour ſeems to me to level at in this Beatitude. *Bleſſed are they that Mourn; for they ſhall be comforted.* q. d. Ye are much miſtaken if ye think the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* will flow in

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Carnal Mirth and Luxury, or that the Members of it ſhall know nothing of Trouble; for both their outward Circumſtances ſhall be full of Croſſes, enough to curb all that wanton Mirth and Pleaſure ye expect; and the Senſe of their own and the World's Sins, and the Fear of God's Judgments ſhall make ſuch an Impreſſion upon their Spirits, that they ſhall ſeriouſly mourn, as becomes true Penitents. But let not this diſcourage you, for though they ſhall be depriv'd of theſe ſenſual Pleaſures, there is another much more valuable Sort, which ſhall be plentifully beſtowed upon them, namely the inward Comforts of the Spirit, and the eternal Comforts in Heaven. This I take to be the true Purport, and right Paraphraſe of the Words. But for our better apprehending the Meaning of them, and for begetting in us a deeper Senſe of the Principal Truths contained in them, I ſhall do theſe three Things.

1. I will conſider more particularly what is meant by them *That Mourn.*

2. I will ſhew how bleſſed they are from *the Comforts* they ſhall reap both here, and hereafter.

3. I ſhall draw ſome Inferences from the whole for our Edification.

I. We

I. We are to consider more particularly what is meant by them *that Mourn*. Where first, because the Virtue here described is very easily misconstrued, there being some Vices and Diseases too, and perhaps some other Virtues, which are apt to be taken for it, it will not be amiss to consider first *Negatively* some Things in which it doth not consist, before we consider *Positively* wherein it doth.

1. By the *Mourners* here we are not to mean all Persons in Trouble and Affliction; for though the foretelling of the Cross was a thing very proper for our Saviour, and a thing which he did upon diverse other Occasions, I do not take that to be the Business here; for all these Beatitudes are so many Virtues, in which the chief Characters of a good Christian, or Member of the *Messiah*'s Kingdom, are laid down; and proper Promises of Rewards are annexed. Now it is not every one that meets with Afflictions and Troubles that acts the virtuous Part, or is entitled to the Comfort here promised. But then perhaps ye may think the Persons here described are such as fall into Trouble on account of their Fidelity and Constancy to the Christian Religion and Practice. I should think so too, if I did not believe *them* to be described in the last Beatitude, *Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness Sake*; and because I am persuaded there is no Tautologie in these Beatitudes, it must needs I think be something else that is intended in this Beatitude. Nor

2. Is

2. Is it the Uneasy Melancholy Person that is here meant, never satisfied with his Circumstances, but always Murmuring and discontented. These Persons are not so much humbled by Affliction, as angry and uneasy on that account. Such a one thinks himself not so well used as he deserves. Under Affliction the true Mourner receives Chastisement, and stands corrected by it; but the Murmurer, as it were strikes again, and scorns to be amended. And therefore it is not the bare being Afflicted which entitles a Man to this Beatitude, except in so far as his Affliction has good effects upon him in working in him Humility and a Godly Sorrow for Sin, which worketh Repentance to Salvation. From hence we may learn how far Natural Grief and Sorrow is an ingredient in this Mourning; for it is according to the Good or Bad use we make of it. If it makes us Serious and Considerate, if it brings us to a sense of our Sins, and sets us in Good Earnest on methods of Amendment, then it belongs to this Mourning or Godly Sorrow in my Text; But if it produces only Pievishness, Impatience, and Discontent, if it only makes us smart, without any other good Fruits of it, if we are either insensible, or not sensible the right Way, if we are either Hardened, or Proud, Impatient and Impenitent, we are none of the right *Mourners* in my Text.

I have shewed you some things wherein *this Mourning* doth not consist, though they look like it; I proceed next to consider more Positively wherein it lyes. In general I take it to be some-

thing

thing that guards us againſt that frolickſome, jovial, carnal Mirth, of which they expected a large ſhare in the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*. And with this view it will take in ſeveral very conſiderable Chriſtian Virtues, as to which their wrong Notions of *Chriſt*'s *Kingdom* gave their Minds a very bad Diſpoſition and Temper. I ſhall Name the chief of them.

1. I begin with *Sobriety* and *Temperance*, as being directly contrary to that vain and frolickſome Mirth, which is deſigned to be condemned by the *Mourning* in my Text. Luxury and High Living undoubtedly was one main thing they propoſed to themſelves in *Chriſt*'s Kingdom, from the carnal Notion they had of it. Now our Saviour here not only Aims at the undeceiving them as to this part of their Expectation, but likewiſe at the fortifying them with all thoſe Graces and Virtues, which were proper for that afflicted State, which he knew was to be their lot in his Service. For if they were not only to be cut off from their Luxurious, libertine Expectations, but to be reduced to a Life of greater hardſhip and penury than moſt other poor Men in this World; if they were to be Excommunicated, Empriſoned, Baniſhed, put to an uncertain wandering Life, without any certain Dwelling Place, expoſed to much Hunger and Cold, and deprived of moſt of the Comforts and Conveniences of Life, ſo that it was a State of Affliction and Mourning they were to be reduced

to,

to, it was neceſſary that they ſhould be armed with a Temper of Mind well fitted and prepared for that afflicted State. And that Temper of Mind may properly be called *Mourning* or *Penitence*: Which required many Virtues to prepare them for it, and to ſupport them under it. Particularly this of *Sobriety* and *Temperance* is an excellent Diſpoſition of Mind for both theſe. For he who is endowed with theſe Virtues is prepared for the hardeſt Fare, and the meaneſt Entertainment he can meet with in this World. He propoſes to himſelf but bare Food and Raiment, and is totally weaned in his Heart from thoſe Pleaſures, which Luxurious Men propoſe to themſelves in Plentiful Tables, and Exceſs or Variety of ſtrong Drink, or in ſtately Houſes, and ſumptuous Furniture, in large Poſſeſſions, and all other Conveniencies and Delights of the Sons of Men. Not that it is unlawful to poſſeſs or enjoy any of theſe Things, ſo that we keep within the Bounds of Moderation and Sobriety; no more than under the firſt Beatitude we found it unlawful to poſſeſs Wealth, ſo that we do not ſet our Hearts upon it; ſo it is not unlawful to enjoy lawful Pleaſures, provided we ſet not our Hearts upon them, ſo as to forget the more ſerious Buſineſs we have to mind in the World, which is Repentance and Amendment of Life. Now that Gluttony and Drunkenneſs and all manner of Luxury are inconſiſtent with this ſerious penitent Temper, and with a Preparation for Croſſes and

and Afflictions of all Sorts, will appear from the Conſideration of the contrary Effects they uſually have on Men's Spirits and Lives. For (1.) There is nothing more contrary to that Seriouſneſs and Conſideration, which is ſo neceſſary for laying the Foundation deep in Religion. The great Objects of Religion are things ſo remote from our Senſes, that it requires a great deal of ſedate Thought, to make us in any degree ſenſible of them. The Idea of God is more to be gathered from the Excellency of his Works, and the Holineſs of his Precepts, than from any innate Principles in our Minds, till they are excited by Reaſon and Argument. Now there is nothing a greater Enemy to Thought and Reflection than that vain Mirth and Sottiſhneſs occaſioned by Gluttony and Drunkenneſs. And (2.) If we have at any time any ſerious Thoughts, any Remorſes of Conſcience, any Deſigns or Reſolutions of Amendment of Life, there is nothing ſooner quenches and extinguiſhes them, than that carnal Mirth, occaſioned by Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, and other Scenes of Luxury. (3.) There is nothing that more ſoftens and enfeebles the Mind, and either expoſes it more to be wrought upon by Temptation to Pleaſure, or more eaſily moves it from its Conſtancy, in caſe of any Hardſhip to be undergone for either the Profeſſion or Practice of Religion, than too great an Inclination to preſent Eaſe and Pleaſure; and an Averſion from the Croſs. (4.) As the Principles of the *Fleſh* and *Spirit* are con-

contrary to each other, the carnal Principle is exceedingly ſtrengthened by Indulgence in Gluttony and Drunkenneſs, Idleneſs and Recreation, and ſuch other Employments as are gratifying to the Fleſh; and on the other hand the ſpiritual Principle is not more ſtrengthened by any thing than by Sobriety and Temperance, and a Contempt of Pleaſure, and a Courage and Conſtancy in enduring Hardſhips and Difficulties in the way of our Duty. As Luxury effeminates a Soldier, and unfits him for the laborious part of his Office, in which the Exerciſes of an hard Campaign harden him; ſo it is in the ſpiritual Warfare; Pleaſure effeminates a Soldier of Chriſt; whereas a ſteady Preparation of Mind for bearing the Croſs hardens and confirms him in his Duty.

2. A *Second* Virtue this *Mourning* comprehends is *Contrition* and *Penitence*. By which I underſtand not any tranſient Act of Sorrow, but ſuch a deep Repentance, as leaves laſting Impreſſions, and makes us put on the habit of *Mourners*, I mean deep Conſideration in our Thoughts, a Serioufneſs in our Speech, and a Gravity in our Garb and way of living; an abandoning of Idleneſs, Vanity, Frolicks, Intemperance, Luxury, indecent or exceſſive Mirth, Laſciviouſneſs, and whatſoever is inconſiſtent with a grave ſerious and penitent Deportment; and the Exerciſe of Faſting and Mortification as far as is conſiſtent with Health, and anſwers the end of ſubduing Luſt: Now there are many

many Things contribute towards the begetting and keeping up of this ſerious penitent Temper in good People. (1.) The Conſideration of their paſt Sins. It is the continual Grief of their Heart, that they have proved unthankful and diſobedient to Almighty God; and this Grief laſts, not only while their Sins and Corruptions prevail, but even long after by the Grace of God they have got the Maſtery of them. After they are ever ſo well advanced, and have made ever ſo good a Progreſs in Sanctification, they are always mindful what wicked Perſons they have been, and are humbled to their dying Day on account of thoſe very Sins, which they have all Reaſon to believe God has pardoned, and they have long ago repented of. For it is a great Miſtake to think that Repentance is only one Fit as it were of godly Sorrow, and mourning for Sin; it is an habitual Temper of the Mind and Courſe of Life, and ſerves ſtill to humble us for what is paſt, as well as to guard us againſt the like Sins and Follies for the Future. (2.) This contrite penitent Temper is kept up by a great Senſe of unmortified Corruptions. For in this Life we have never ſuch an abſolute Conqueſt over our Luſts, but that they are ever and anon rebelling, and giving us a great deal of Uneaſineſs. They are like the Remnants of the accurſed Nations, which God left among the *Iſraelites* to prove and try them: For if ever we remit our Watch, they are Snares and Traps unto us, and Scourges in our Sides and Thorns in our Eyes.

The

The beſt Man upon Earth has many a bitter Conflict with his Luſts and Corruptions, and doth not in every particular Combat come off ſucceſsful; but is often foiled and overcome; though God gives him Grace to renew the Combat, and never to give out, till he comes off victorious in the end. (3.) As unmortified Corruptions, ſo imperfect Graces occaſion a great deal of penitential Sorrow to good Men. That Dryneſs and want of Appetite and Taſte, which is incident to their Devotions; that Negligence and want of Care and Zeal, which attends and clogs their beſt Services; that Aptneſs to be led away with Temptations; that ſpiritual Sleepineſs and Drowſineſs, which in the Parable of the Virgins ſeized the Wiſe as well as the Fooliſh; the many Hazards they run, and the little Comfort they find in theſe their negligent Courſes, affords them great matter for Grief and Mourning, while they paſs through this wretched Life, this valley of Tears; for ſo indeed the very beſt of it may be called, if compared with Heaven. (4.) The Sins of others contribute to this penitential Mourning (*a*) *Rivers of Waters*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *run down mine Eyes becauſe they keep not thy Law.* And though all Mourners may not be of ſo melting a Temper, ſo as to be able to ſhed Tears in ſuch abundance, yet their Grief and Mourning per-

(*a*) Pſalm 119. 136.

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(*a*) Pſalm 119. 136.

haps is not the leſs; as grieving not only for their own and other Men's Sins, but for their too great Inſenſibility and Hardheartedneſs on account thereof; they have not thoſe Rivers of Tears, but heartily wiſh they had them, and mourn that they have them not. They can ſay with the Prophet, *Jeremiah*, (*a*) *My Bowels, my Bowels, I am pained at my very Heart.* And with the ſame Prophet elſewhere, (*b*) *O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears that I might weep Day and Night.* (5.) As a Senſe of Sins abounding occaſions this Mourning, it is nouriſhed by a Senſe of God's Judgments either threatened, or impending, or executed. For the Mourner deſcribed in my Text is not one of thoſe hardened obdured Creatures, that diſregards and deſpiſes God's Judgments, and will not underſtand the Language and Meaning of his Rods; he is not like *Pharoah*, who preſently forgat and turned inſenſible, as ſoon as the Rod was removed from off his Back; but like the *Pſalmiſt* he can truly ſay, (*c*) *My Fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.*

3. The third and laſt Virtue I ſhall name as comprehended under this godly Mourning, is a Diſtaſte of the World, and a Longing for Heaven. For though a good Man thinks it his Duty (and accordingly practiſes it very carefully) to be con-

(*a*) Jer. 4. 19. (*b*) Jer. 9. 1. (*c*) Pſalm 119. 120.

tent

tent in every State of Life, yet all the while his Heart is in Heaven; that is his Home and Country; and he is but in a ſtate of Pilgrimage here; and accordingly this preſent Life at beſt is inſipid to him in Compariſon of that which is to come. This occaſions a pious Mourning for our Lord's Abſence, and (*a*) *a deſire to be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all.* And the very beſt of Saints, if they have ever ſo much Grace beſtowed upon them, look upon it only as an *Earneſt* of that immenſe Happineſs which they hope for hereafter; and it ſerves only to ſharpen their Appetite after it. (*b*) *O that I had Wings like a Dove? for then would I flee away and be at reſt*; ſays the devout *Pſalmiſt.*

What has been ſaid may ſuffice for the *Firſt* Thing I propoſed, namely to ſhew what is meant by them that *Mourn.*

2. I proceed now to the *Second*, which is to conſider how Bleſſed they are from the Comforts they ſhall reap both here and hereafter. Bleſſed are they that mourn, *for they ſhall be comforted.*

There are many things that comfort theſe Mourners I have deſcribed. For, this Mourning or Penitential Sorrow is like Ground well prepared, ready manured and watered, fit to receive the Seeds, and to bring forth the Fruits of all Chriſtian Virtues, which bring in a rich Harveſt of Comfort and Fe-

(*a*) Phil. 1. 23. (*b*) Pſalm 55. 6.

licity. For (1.) Though this Penitential Sorrow is inconſiſtent with a Courſe of carnal Pleaſure, and the Exceſs and Luxury attending a voluptuous Life; it is no way inconſiſtent with *Spiritual Joy*, or *rejoycing in the Lord*, but fits and prepares the Mind ſo much the better for it. It is one of the Characters the Apoſtle St. *Paul* gives of himſelf and of his fellow Chriſtians, that though externally they appeared ſorrowful, yet they were poſſeſſed with a great inward Joy. *As ſorrowful, yet always rejoycing*, 2 Cor. vi. 10. To look only at the outward Troubles and Afflictions of good Men, (eſpecially in thoſe Days of Perſecution) one would have thought they had Load enough to break any Man's Back; but if at the ſame time we could ſee the inward Conſolations they are poſſeſſed of, we ſhould be convinced they have an inward Spring of Joy, which all outward Calamities cannot exhauſt or dry up. The ſame St. *Paul* tells us that (a) *he took Pleaſure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Neceſſities, in Perſecutions, in Diſtreſſes, for Chriſt's Sake.* And the Prophet *Habakkuk* comforts himſelf with this Conſideration, *Hab.* iii. 17. That *although the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall Fruit be in the Vines, the labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Fields ſhall yield no Meat, the Flock ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the*

(a) 2 Cor. 12.10.

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Stalls; yet he would rejoyce in the Lord and joy in the God of his Salvation. The greateſt Flood of penitential Tears has an inexpreſſible deal of Comfort in it, infinitely beyond all the Pleaſures of Sin. (2.) And if this Penitential Sorrow it ſelf is immediately joined to ſo great Refreſhments of Comfort, what great Additions may we think are made to it from the many bleſſed Fruits and Conſequences of it in the Heart and Life? To name a few of them. As this Penitential Sorrow weans our Hearts from the World, it naturally begets in them a Longing Deſire after Heaven, and a Delight in God; which is infinitely comfortable. This again occaſions a drawing near to him in Prayer, Meditation, and Contemplation; Contemplation I mean both of his Nature and Attributes, and of his Works of Creation, Providence, Redemption and Grace; and eſpecially the Contemplation of his Love in the Perſon of his dear Son Chriſt Jeſus. All which are very comfortable Exerciſes. Further this godly Sorrow is always attended with a great Vigilance againſt Temptations. For as the burnt Child dreads the Fire, whoever has felt the Smart of Penitential Sorrow remembers to watch, and to ſtand upon his guard, particularly againſt thoſe Sins, whereby he was formerly enſnared. And this, as it affords great Satisfaction to the Mind at preſent, (for every act of Care and Virtue treaſures up proportionally as much Comfort and Joy) ſo it guards againſt ſo much Grief and Sorrow, which are the infallible

Conſequences of repeated Sins. This Temper too both makes one very deſirous of more ſolid Comforts than ſinful Pleaſures do afford, and doth likewiſe excellently prepare the Mind for thoſe Comforts. As Hunger gives both a ſharp Appetite after our Food, and makes it go down with a good Guſto and Reliſh; ſo Penitential Sorrow both raiſes an Appetite after divine Comforts, and gives them a moſt pleaſant Reliſh when they come. If there were no more but the Increaſe of Grace, whereby we are more and more enabled to ſubdue our Luſts and Corruptions, and to acquire more confirmed Habits of every Chriſtian Grace and Vertue, the Comfort of this is unſpeakable, for the Soul ſtill acquires further Degrees of Liberty, Grace, Reſt and Joy, the further ſhe advances in bringing forth theſe Fruits of Repentance. And all this is attended with a Train of the moſt delightful and ſatisfying Comforts, even in this Life, that can be imagined; ſuch as, a Peace of Conſcience; a good Government of all the Faculties and Paſſions; a well grounded Hope riſing from that great Peace and Joy we have in believing; and an Acquieſcence and Contentment of Mind in the happy Change of our State and Condition, which is ſo great and ſweet that it is like an Heaven upon Earth. (3.) If the Fruits of this Temper are ſo great in this Life, what will they be in Heaven? There are the only pure and unmixed Joys and Comforts; not allayed with the Croſſes and Sins, which are continually

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giving a Check to them here. At preſent we can have but very imperfect Notions of theſe Heavenly Comforts. Only in general, we may aſſure our ſelves they are both much purer in their Nature, and much more exalted in Degree, and infinitely more laſting and permanent, and that we ſhall be much better qualified for taſting and reliſhing them, than ever the beſt Men are for reliſhing the moſt pure and heavenly Satisfactions and Comforts, which are vouchſafed to them in their moſt happy Moments in this Life, I cannot but think that it muſt be the Joys of Heaven, which are chiefly intended by this Promiſe in my Text; the other which I ſpoke of in this World being both very imperfect, and too frequently interrupted by the Sins and Temptations and conſtant Troubles of this Life.

3. The third and laſt Thing I propoſed was to draw ſome Inferences from the Doctrine of this Beatitude for our further Edification.

1. This Doctrine may ſerve to diſcover the great Folly of a great part of Mankind; I mean not only thoſe who give up themſelves to ſuch an intemperate way of living, as to drown all ſerious Thoughts, and to ſmother all Remorſe for the Errors of their Life paſt, or ſincere Reſolutions of Amendment for the time to come; but all thoſe likewiſe who place their Happineſs in a great Plenty and Affluence of every thing that may gratify their Luxury, and may make them ſwim in the Pleaſures of this World. How many are there who bend all

their Care and Study after great Eſtates, ſtately Houſes, rich Furniture, plentiful Tables, and all other Things which may gratify their Luxury; and in the mean time are both Strangers to the Joys which riſe from the exerciſe of Virtue here, and to the Hopes of a bleſſed Immortality hereafter?

2. This Doctrine may ſhew us the neceſſity of a Mourning Penitent Temper, that we ſhould endeavour to be always deeply affected with a godly Sorrow in regard of our paſt Sins and Follies, and an holy fear of falling into the like again. There is nothing more inconſiſtent with this Temper than the looking back on our Sins with Pleaſure and Satisfaction, and acting them over again in our impure Imaginations, with repeated Approbation. Nothing likewiſe is more contrary to this Mourning Temper than inſtead of mortifying our Luſts and Corruptions by Faſting, Abſtinence, and Sobriety, and avoiding all Occaſions of Temptation, to provoke and enflame them by high Eating and Drinking, and running upon Temptations, and other Inventions to prove our own Devils and Tempters.

3. If there is ſo much inward Comfort attending Repentance, which yet is the moſt ſmarting and painful part of Religion, then this may convince us of the ſweetneſs and eaſineſs of Chriſt's Yoke, the hardeſt of whoſe Service is attended with ſo much inward Peace and Satisfaction; for Repentance

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is like the Pangs and Throws of the new Birth, attended with a great deal of Struggling, Sorrow, and Uneaſineſs; but the more we go on in the ways of Virtue, ſo much the more plentifully and ſolidly do we participate of that inward Joy and Contentment, which is infinitely beyond the greateſt Pleaſures of Sin. Let us not then be diſcouraged at the firſt Difficulties in Religion, or raiſe up a bad Report upon it, as the evil Spyes did upon the promiſed Land, ſaying it was *a Land that devoured its Inhabitants*. For when we come to be better acquainted with it, we ſhall find the Gyants were unreaſonably multiplied; and that the Land is both a fruitful and a pleaſant Land, and fully anſwers all the Pains we laid out in purchaſing it.

To conclude, let us reſolve on grave ſerious Temper of Mind, and watchful Courſe of Life. Let us walk humbly, temperately, warily and conſiderately, like Men who believe in good earneſt that they have a great Stake to manage, and that according as they ſow in this Life, they ſhall reap in the Life to come. We ſhall find that the Pleaſures of a ſerious virtuous Life are not like the Pleaſures of Sin, a little ſweet at their firſt coming on, but bitter at their going off, and poiſonous and unwholſom for ever. Quite contrary, the longer we continue, and the greater Progreſs we make in the ways of Repentance and New Life, the more inward Comfort, Joy and Peace, we ſhall

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treaſure up for our ſelves in this World; and in the World to come, Eternal Life and Felicity. For which bleſſed State God of his infinite Mercy prepare us all through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. *To whom*, &c.

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SERMON VI.

MAT. V. 5.

Bleſſed are the Meek; *for they ſhall inherit the Earth.*

AS in *the firſt* Beatitude our Lord gave a check to the Covetous and Ambitious, and in *the ſecond* to the Senſual and Luxurious Inclinations of Men; ſo now here in *the third*, he gives a check to the Proud and Iraſcible Paſſions, which are as troubleſom to a Mans ſelf, and more troubleſom to his Neighbours than any of the other. And in this likewiſe he meets with another of thoſe bad Diſpoſitions of Mens minds by Reaſon of which they were ſo ill prepared for the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom. As if he had ſaid, Ye fancy there are great Conqueſts to be made, and mighty Battels to be fought by

by the *Meſſiah*, and his followers; and conſequently that one main Qualification for his Kingdom is a great Fierceneſs in attacking and overcoming, and as great a Reſentment in puniſhing all his Enemies: But I muſt undeceive you; it is not theſe Carnal Weapons, nor this Martial Courage or Proweſs, which is wanted for the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*: But a quite contrary Spirit and Temper; a Spirit of Meekneſs and Humility, which though ye may think a very bad Preparation for Conquering and Poſſeſſing the World, yet it will really qualify you better for the quiet Enjoyment of ſuch a Portion of it, as this Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* requires, than the greateſt Military Skill, animated with the fierceſt and moſt undaunted Paſſions. From the Words I propoſe theſe two things.

1. To give you a Deſcription of the Virtue of *Meekneſs*, here recommended.

2. To conſider the Bleſſing annexed to the Meek Perſons, *That they ſhall inherit the Earth.*

1. *Firſt*, I am to give a Deſcription of the Virtue of *Meekneſs*. *Bleſſed are the Meek*. *Meekneſs* in general is a right Government of the Paſſion of Anger; and eſpecially a Bridling and Reſtraining that headlong Unrulineſs, which is incident to it, that it ſtir not but at the command of Reaſon; and that it go on juſt as far as Reaſon directs, and no

no further; and that it come off again at the ſame command. So that to underſtand the nature of this Virtue of *Meekneſs*, which is a right Government of Anger, we muſt know when and where, and how far Anger is to be made uſe of; which is certainly a very difficult Inquiry, and almoſt Impoſſible to be rightly perform'd, if we do in the leaſt admit of this ſame unruly Paſſion of Anger into the Conſultation. Anger is never proper to Conſult, though ſometimes it may help to Execute, by putting ſome Life and Vigour into the cooler and ſlower Conſultations of reaſon. That I may not be miſunderſtood, as if I meant that the Vice of Anger is ever good for any thing; we muſt careſully Diſtinguiſh between two things, which in the World go under one Name; the Natural Paſſion, and the Sin of Anger. The Natural Paſſion is a thing indifferent in it ſelf; the right Uſe of which is a Virtue, and the wrong Uſe of it a Vice. It is true this Natural Paſſion being much more frequently employed to a Wrong than a Right Uſe, for that reaſon it goes more commonly under the name of a Vice; and there have been ſome Learned and Good Men in the World, who have been altogether for baniſhing this Paſſion from having any Commerce with Virtue, as being of Opinion that right Reaſon and Judgment alone would Act a great deal better without it, than with it. But for the ſame reaſon they might be againſt all the other Paſſions of Love, Hatred, Deſire

Deſire and Averſion, Joy and Grief, Hope and Deſpair, as well as Anger; for they are all often abuſed; the right Inference from which Obſervation is, that we ſhould reduce them to their right Uſe, not totally extirpate them. And the right Uſe of them all is, Firſt that we direct them to the proper Objects, Then that we keep them under good Command as to the Meaſure and Degrees of that uſe and ſervice we have for them. But that this Chriſtian Philoſophy concerning the uſe of the Paſſion of Anger, may be the better underſtood even by Perſons of the moſt ordinary Capacity, I will beg leave to caſt ſome Light upon it by a very homely Parable or Similitude: From which I hope to ſhew you both the Uſe, and Abuſe of the Paſſions, particularly of this paſſion of Anger in Human Life. Let us then compare Men to Shepherds feeding their Flocks in a very large range of Paſturage, of which ſome is in wild Mountains, ſome in ſpatious Plains, ſome in Thickets of Woods, ſome on Rocks and Precipices; Let us ſuppoſe likewiſe that every Flock is apt to ſtray, and that there are abundance of Wolves and other Beaſts of prey ready to catch and devour them. Suppoſe likewiſe the Shepherds finding they were not themſelves ſwift enough of Foot to ſurround the whole range of Paſturage, and to gather in the Stragglers, but that the Wolves catched daily ſome of their Flock, and made their eſcape with the Booty, before they could overtake them and reſcue

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it; ſuppoſe I ſay that the Shepherds obſerving theſe things, and upon a deep Conſultation how to remedy them, had by ſome of the Wiſer Sort been adviſed to the help of another ſagacious Creature, and very officious and ſerviceable to Men, called *Dogs*; by a good breeding and management of which they might be wonderfully aſſiſted in the Defence of their Flocks, as being both ſagacious to ſmell out the Enemy, and dexterous in following him upon the ſcent; very Fierce and Stout likewiſe in attacking, eſpecially when ſet on and animated and aſſiſted by Men: Swift of Foot too, to ſcour the Grounds, and to bring in the Stragglers out of Danger; and withal very Wakeful in the Night time, and apt immediately to make a Noiſe, and to give the Alarm upon the firſt Approach of the Enemy. This ſeemed to be a notable expedient; But when it came to be put in practice, a great many of the Dogs proved exceeding pernicious: They flew at Friend and Foe, and whenever they were Hungry or in the leaſt Provoked by the Butting of any of the Flock, in their Maſters Abſence they would fall upon them and devour them; and ſometimes when ſet on gently to pinch and reduce a Straggler, could not be brought off, till they had worried or crippled him, and in a ſhort time did ſo much Dammage, that upon a ſecond Conſultation ſome of the Shepherds had almoſt concluded to deſtroy all the *Dogs*, and to undertake the feeding and defending of their Flocks with-

without them, till they were diſſwaded by others Wiſer than the reſt, who had trained *their Dogs* ſo well to the buſineſs, that they had quite laid aſide the Savageneſs of their Nature, and would ſooner ſtarve than hurt one of the Flock; in the mean time performing all the other parts of Watchful Sentinels, of Careful Keepers, of ſwift Gatherers and Reducers of the Flock: And ſharp upon the ſcent, and Fierce upon the fight of an Enemy. And therefore they perſwaded the reſt inſtead of deſtroying the Dogs, to take a great deal of pains to train, Watch and Govern them well, by which means they ſhould find a great deal of help and good ſervice, and no prejudice from them at all. Thus it is with all our Paſſions, and particularly with this Paſſion of Anger; if we take pains with it, and keep it under the ſtrict Command of Reaſon and Grace; if we let it looſe to exerciſe its Fierceneſs upon none but ſuch as Reaſon has before taught it are Enemies; if we can ſet it on, and take it off, wherever it is juſt and fitting; and ſometimes only with a deſign to Bark, to Frighten and Scare People to their Duty, without Hurting them; at other times giving them a gentle Pinch of Puniſhment, if a Bark of Reproof won't reclaim them; if in the whole Management of Anger we keep a good Command, that it exceed not the bounds of Reaſon and Religion, we ſhall find a great deal of Benefit from it, and that it is of excellent Uſe in the Government both of Larger and Leſſer

Leſſer Societies, and in regulating all our own Actions with comfort and advantage. The particular Caſes, and Directions upon them are ſo large a *Theme*, that I ſhall not meddle with them. The Virtue by which we thus govern our Anger, and keep it within juſt Bounds, is called *Meekneſs*. I ſhall juſt give you ſome of the chief Properties of it, that ye may have ſo much the clearer Notion what a bleſſed Thing it is; and then go on to the Reaſon of the Text, to ſhew how *The Meek ſhall inherit the Earth.*

1. The *Firſt* and chief Ingredient in this *Meekneſs*, is an Inward Calmneſs and Tranquility of Mind; In the eleventh *chap.* of this Goſpel at the 29*th*, *v.* it is called a *Meekneſs and Lowlineſs of Heart. Learn of me ſays our Saviour for I am Meek and lowly in Heart.* Without this, all Outward Calmneſs will come much ſhort of this virtue of *Meekneſs*. For ſome from a Dulneſs and Heavineſs of Temper; others from Policy and a deep laid Revenge; others from Fear and Cowardice, either have not, or think not fit to expreſs any Anger and Reſentment; who yet are Strangers to this beſt part of Meekneſs, this inward Tranquility, which checks and Suppreſſes the very firſt motions to Anger in the Heart. As this is the chief, ſo it is the Difficulteſt part of Meekneſs; as being the product and reſult of a good Conſcience towards God, of a Kindneſs and true Love to our Neighbour, of good Deſigns, and Honeſt Actions, and a freedom from all ſuch

reſtleſs, Anxious, or revengeful thoughts as may riſle or diſcompoſe our Inward Peace.

2. This inward Tranquility of Mind ſhews it ſelf in an Outward, Affable, Courteous, Kind and Friendly Behaviour to Men. The Meek Man has no Fierceneſs or Haughtineſs in his Countenance; no Rudeneſs or Harſhneſs in his Speech; nothing that is Inſolent or Affronting in his Actions. He is not Cenſorious or Captious, Haſty or Precipitate; He has the Civility and Patience to give Men a Fair Hearing; and to hear them to an End, and even to pardon their Indiſcretions. His own both Words and Actions receive a ſweet Tincture from the inward good Temper of his Mind; for as he loves to do Good, ſo he loves to do it after a Kind and Obliging manner. And even where Reaſon will not allow him to grant Peoples Requeſts, he ſtudies to deny in a Gentle and Winning way; without harſhneſs and ſeverity; as being, before he can deny others, obliged firſt to uſe a piece of Self denial upon himſelf, in reſiſting his Inclination to Acts of Favour and Beneficence.

3. The *Meek* Man is Slow to Anger. As he does by no means encourage Tale-bearers and Back-biters, ſo he is not forward to give credit to any Stories that tend to the hurt or prejudice of others, or to ſtir up his anger againſt them; but is apt to put the beſt and Faireſt Conſtruction on his Neighbours Words and Actions they are Capable of. Nay further he has ſo entirely ſubdued the

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Paſſion of Anger in himſelf, that it is no eaſy Matter for him to awaken and let it looſe, even where there is juſt occaſion for it; the ways of Severity being uſed by him only as Laſt Remedies, after all ſofter and milder Courſes have been tried in vain.

4. The *Meek* Man keeps due Meaſures, and is Prudent and Moderate in his Paſſion, tempering it with a Spirit of Calmneſs and Moderation. As there is great difference between the Rebukes of a Friend, and the Reproaches of an Enemy; between a ſteady Pace, and a furious Driving; between a well diſciplined Dog's pinching the Ear, and a bloody Sheep-biter's flying at the Throat; ſo the Meek Man can rebuke, chaſtiſe, and reſtore a Delinquent in the Spirit of Meekneſs, gaining upon his Reaſon, without provoking his Paſſion, or driving him to deſperate Extremes. He has a great Compaſſion for Men in Diſtreſs, and a due Regard to their Frailties and Infirmities, and to the Temptations which overcome them; remembring that he himſelf is in the Body.

5. The *Meek* Man lets go his Anger as ſoon as poſſibly he can in reaſon; at leaſt he ſuffers it not to ſettle into a fixed Hatred, or laſting Reſentment; but is ready to embrace all Overtures of Reconciliation; For the Sake of which he is often willing to part with ſome-what of his own juſt Right, rather than keep up a Quarrel.

6. I ſhall add but one thing more in the Deſcription of this Virtue of *Meekneſs*, that we may know it the better, at leaſt from the Company it keeps; that is, that it is always joined with Humility, Reſignation, Contentment, Cheerfulneſs, Courteſy, Gratitude, Moderation, Peaceableneſs, Kindneſs, Patience, Forgiveneſs of Injuries, Charity, and all other Social and good-natur'd Virtues, with moſt of which it is ſo connected in the Holy Scriptures, that I do not know whether they ought not to enter into the Definition of it; at leaſt they are ſuch Neceſſary Properties and Qualifications of it, that it is not of the right Stamp without them.

So much for the firſt thing I propoſed, The Deſcription of *Meekneſs*.

2. I proceed next to conſider the Bleſſing here annexed to the *Meek*, namely *That they ſhall inherit the Earth*.

Some Interpreters give us a very ſtrained Expoſition of this Promiſe, as if by *Earth* were meant *Heaven*, that being eminently the Land of the Living. Some others think it muſt be that *New Earth* St. *Peter* ſpeaks of, *Wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs*, 2 *Pet.* iii. 13. What has driven both theſe to thoſe Interpretations muſt be the ſeeming Strangeneſs and Unuſualneſs of Worldly Comforts among the Goſpel Promiſes, eſpecially among theſe Beatitudes, where all the reſt of the Promiſes ſeem to be of a more ſpiritual Nature. But whatever there

is in this; (for perhaps we ſhall find it otherwiſe, when we come to conſider the two next Beatitudes) I think it is a dangerous thing, becauſe of our puzzling Objections, to depart from the Letter, or plain Literal Meaning of any Text. The Words are a punctual Quotation out of *Pſ.* xxxvii. 11. *But the Meek ſhall inherit the Earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in the abundance of Peace.* Where no doubt *David* underſtood it of this Earth of ours, or of the Land of *Canaan*. For the Tenor of that whole *Pſalm* is deſigned to ſhew, that wicked Men ſhall by God's Judgments ſuddenly periſh, whilſt the Righteous lived eaſily and quietly in the Land of *Canaan*. For clearing the difficulty of the Words then, underſtood as a Temporal Promiſe, we are not preſently to fancy that becauſe it is ſaid, *The Meek ſhall inherit the Earth*, it is therefore promiſed that they ſhall have a great Affluence and Abundance of things Temporal to make them Great and Rich in this World. Our Saviour has told us, *Luke* xii. 15. that *Man's Life*, (that is, the true Felicity of it) *doth not conſiſt in the Abundance of the Things which he poſſeſſeth.* And therefore if the Felicity of this Life doth not conſiſt in Riches, we have no Reaſon to believe they are here promiſed. If we look into that part of the *Pſalm* from whence this Quotation is brought, there ſeem to be theſe two Things meant by this Promiſe to the Meek. 1. *Firſt*, God's Bleſſing and Protection to Them and their Families, when his Judgments ſhould overtake and cut off

the Wicked. *For evil doers*, ſays he, (*a*) *ſhall be cut off*; *but thoſe that wait upon the Lord they ſhall inherit the Earth*; *For yet a little while and the Wicked ſhall not be*; *yea thou ſhall diligently conſider his Place, and it ſhall not be.* So that here is a Promiſe of Protection to the Meek, and a Threatening of Exciſion to the Wicked. 2. Another thing meant by *inheriting the Earth* there, is their enjoying their Portion of it with Quietneſs, Contentment, and Satisfaction. *But the Meek ſhall inherit the Earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in the abundance of Peace*; which Promiſes ſignify both their having a Competency of the good Things of this Life, and the inward Contentment of Mind, and Freedom from Anxiety and Carking Care, with which they enjoy it. Theſe three then, *Protection*, *a Competency*, and *Contentment* appear plainly to have been ſignified by this Promiſe in that 37th *Pſalm*, from whence the Words are taken. And why theſe may not be the ſame Bleſſings that are here promiſed I can ſee no Reaſon. The like Temporal Promiſes we have in the *New Teſtament*; St. *Paul* tell us that *Godlineſs has the Promiſe both of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. And our Bleſſed Saviour has told us, that *If we ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, all theſe things*, meaning all Worldly

(*a*) Pſalm 37. 9.

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Neceſſaries, ſhall be added to us, *Mat.* vi. 33. Why may we not then interpret and believe this Text in the plain Senſe, which the Words import? Which to take it at the loweſt is this, that to the Meek God will provide a Competency of earthly Bleſſings, which he will beſtow upon them as an Inheritance; that is, they ſhall have them eaſily and without great Trouble; without anxious Care and Solicitude, for that is the Vice he is dehorting from in the 6th of *Mat.* juſt now quoted; And the Word *Inherit* is very proper to expreſs this Senſe; becauſe what comes to Men by Inheritance comes much more eaſily than what comes by *Hard* Labour; *They ſhall inherit the Earth* then is as if he had ſaid, they ſhall have enough of the World without the carking Care and Solicitudes of it; it ſhall come to them eaſily, and without great Trouble, as Inheritances drop into People's Laps, which they never wrought or laboured for.

It is true the Goſpel is ſo full of a better ſort of Promiſes, that theſe Temporal ones are eaſily overlooked; and I doubt by many but little believed; though I queſtion not, Experience, as well as Scripture will confirm this Truth, that God's Bleſſing with a Competency of all good Things neceſſary for this Life is uſually beſtowed upon Good Men. But it may perhaps ſeem ſtrange that ſuppoſing this to be true of Good Men in general, ſuch a Promiſe ſhould be here annexed to the Virtue of *Meekneſs*; a Virtue which of all other ſeems to expoſe a Man

the moſt to Oppreſſion and Injuries of all Sorts from their inſolent Neighbours. To this I have ſome things to anſwer, which may be worthy of your Conſideration. 1. *Firſt*, that our Bleſſed Lord might chooſe to inſtance in the *Meek*, for this very Reaſon, becauſe he is more expoſed to Injuries, and in the Eye of the World ſeemingly more Naked, and Defenceleſs than others; like that Promiſe of Defence to the Innocent, and Threatening to Oppreſſors, *Pſ.* xii. 5. *For the Oppreſſion of the Poor, for the ſighing of the needy, now will I ariſe (Saith the Lord) I will ſet him in ſafety from him that puffeth at him.* I take this Promiſe in my Text, to be a Particular Declaration that God will take the Humble Meek Man under his Protection, and that the leſs he goes about either to hurt others, or to avenge himſelf, God will ſo much the more defend him. 2. It is worth our Conſideration that tho' the Meek Man, if we conſider him as ſtanding alone, ſeems to be very much overmatched by the Proud and Fierce Oppreſſor; yet if we will conſider him as he is commonly fenced and guarded with the Countenance and Protection of Laws and Government; and with the Friendſhip and Love of his Neighbours; and the General good Opinion of all Men; (whereas the Oppreſſor is as much diſcountenanced and hated) we ſhall find the Meek Man is not ſo much Overmatched, as at firſt Sight he would ſeem to be. For to conſider theſe things a little more particularly. (1.) It is certain that

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Laws and Government, generally ſpeaking, are of the ſide of the innocent Meek Man. This is the very Purport and Intent of their Make and Conſtitution, and wherever this true Intent of Law and Government is purſued, Oppreſſors are forced to keep in their Horns and let their Meek and Peaceable Neighbours enjoy their own in quiet. (2) Beſides this Aſſiſtance from the Publick to Meek and Peaceable Men, it is to be conſidered that they are commonly happy in the Love and Kindneſs of their Neighbours, which proves generally a very great help and Protection to them. For ſuppoſing thoſe Neighbours to be either good or bad themſelves, they commonly agree in the Protection of the Meek and Innocent, againſt the Inſults and Injuries of the Oppreſſour. For as for the Good, they are uſually better linked in Friendſhip, and ſo more able and willing to ſtand by and protect one another; And as for the Bad, howſoever they may be inclined to Oppreſſive courſes themſelves, they do not care to countenance the Oppreſſions of others. And it has been often Obſerved, that when one Wicked Man has Oppreſſed a Poor Neighbour, another not much Better, has undertaken the Defence and Protection of him; and ſo he has kept his Inheritance and Poſſeſſion, which if he had ſtood alone, he could not ſo well have defended. (3) *Laſtly* let it be conſidered that there is a great ſhare of Worldly Comfort and Felicity doth very naturally and uſually attend the Meek Good conditioned Man, and that (*ea nomine*) upon account

account of his Meekneſs. To name you ſome Inſtances of this; for I have not now time to enlarge.

(1.) He is ſo Peaceable and good conditioned, that he ſeldom has any Quarrels or Controverſies with his Neighbours; he gives no Provocation; and conſequently the fewer are given to him; and when injured, he paſſes by many ſmall Faults: And for greater Injuries he tries all Calm and Peaceable Ways, of reconciling and making them up; So that he is much leſs at Law, and in Broils and Quarrels than other Men; and this ſaves him both his Money and his Quiet.

(2.) He is ſo a good a Subject, and ſo obedient to Government, that he will live quietly and peaceably under it if he can, and therefore he is in leſs danger than other Men, of being engaged in Factions, Rebellions and Inſurrections, which deſtroy Mens Eſtates and Peace.

(3.) Being mild and good conditioned, and making all eaſie that are about him, he is more like to have the great Bleſſing of Peace at home in his own Family, than other Angry and ill conditioned Men. And this, beſides that it is a moſt valuable Bleſſing in it ſelf, is likewiſe the Cauſe of many other Bleſſings; It makes Huſbands and Wives, Children and Servants love their Homes, and mind their Buſineſs with pleaſure and delight. Where this is, there is no drawing contrary Ways, but all join unanimouſly in the Yoke, and cheerfully carry on their Buſineſs.

(4.) The

(4.) The mild and good conditioned Man, doing no harm, but all the good he can to his Neighbours, has commonly many Friends and but few Enemies; And his Friends are generally of the Beſt, and his Enemies of the Worſt ſort of Men. His Temper is ſuch, as is apteſt to make a Friend, and to ſoften an Enemy; ſo that generally ſpeaking he is Happier in a good quiet Neighbourhood, that wiſhes him well, and are ready to help him out upon a pinch, than moſt other Men.

(5.) Being in his Temper well diſpoſed to be a good Subject (as I obſerved before) he has generally the protection of Laws, and Favour of Government, which is a great Earthly Bleſſing.

(6.) If ſuch a Man, who has been Kind and Good to all, ſhould happen to meet with Croſſes and Loſſes in the World; he will be ſure to find more Pity, Countenance, and Relief in his Adverſity, than other Men, who never were good themſelves, nor good to their Neighbours in their Proſperity.

(7.) *Laſtly* (which is above all the reſt) what ever Portion the Meek Man has of the good things of this Life, be it great or ſmall, he enjoys it with a quiet Contented Mind, and Gods Bleſſing; and then I am ſure he is Rich enough: For as the Apoſtle ſaith, 1. Tim. vi. 6. *Godlineſs with Contentment is great gain.*

From all which Conſiderations we may ſee how this Promiſe of the *Meek's inheriting the Earth*, is made

made good in a literal Senſe. I muſt only add one Caution, which will anſwer all Objections; and which if it had been conſidered, would have prevented the Interpreting of this Text away from the Literal Senſe. It is this; that Temporal Promiſes, as they are not to be underſtood to obſtruct Spiritual or Eternal Ones, ſo they are to be always taken in Subordination to them. So that God muſt not be thought to Evacuate or Fruſtrate a Temporal Promiſe, when he makes it give place to a Spiritual or Eternal one: As if inſtead of a Worldly Inheritance he ſhould by the way of the Croſs bring us to an Increaſe of Grace here, or to the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter. He has not then fallen ſhort of his Temporal Promiſe, but has far exceeded it: As a Man would not be worſe than his Word, who had promiſed a Friend a Legacy; and inſtead of that, ſhould make him his Heir. St. *Peter* argues this Caſe excellently, and I ſhall conclude with it, and deſire to leave it with you, as the Sum of what I have now ſaid of this Temporal Promiſe to the Meek, It is in 1. Pet. iii. 9, Where he aſſures the good Chriſtians to whom he writes, of Gods Bleſſing, Protection and Aſſiſtance. *Ye are called* ſays he *to inherit a Bleſſing.* For *he that will love Life, and ſee good Days,* (there's *the inheriting the Earth*) *let him refrain his Tongue from evil, and his Lips that they ſpeak no Guile; let him eſchew Evil and do good, let him ſeek peace and enſue it.* (There's a Deſcription of *the Meek*) Then follows *firſt*, a Promiſe

miſe of Gods Bleſſing and Protection to him. *For the Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Prayers: But the Face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil.* Then 2ly the general Favour of Men, *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* *Laſtly* a Suppoſition of the worſt (which anſwers my laſt Caution) If the World and the Favour of Men ſhould fail, there is a Better State of Happineſs to come after all this. *But if ye do ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake happy are ye.* And ſo he goes on to deſcribe the Bleſſings of the Croſs, and the Higher Felicities prepared for them in a better Life. But I doubt I treſpaſs upon your patience. God of his infinite Mercy multiply upon you all Bleſſings both Spiritual and Temporal in Chriſt Jeſus. *To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt*, &c.

SER-

SERMON VII.

MAT. V. 6.

Bleſſed are they which do Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs: *for they ſhall be filled.*

The Firſt Sermon on this Text.

OUR Saviour's Diſciples and Followers had now their Expectations mightily raiſed with the News of the Approaching Kingdom of *the Meſſiah*; with which both *John the Baptiſt* and He himſelf began to acquaint them in their Sermons; but having withal very Carnal Notions of that Kingdom, as if by Violence and Conqueſt they were to acquire great Wealth and Honour, and to live

live Merry Senſual Lives in the *Meſſiah*'s ſervice; they flocked after him with their Minds full of Covetouſneſs, Oppreſſion, Cruelty, Injuſtice, and Thoughts of Conqueſt; the unfitteſt Temper of Mind for his ſervice that could poſſibly be imagined. And therefore it is very Obſervable that *ſimul et ſemel*, ſo ſoon as *John Baptiſt* and he communicated the good News of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom being at Hand, they Preached up likewiſe the neceſſity of a new Diſpoſition of Mind, or a Change of Heart and Life, which we call *Repentance*. *Repent* ſaid they, *for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*. And not contented with Preaching the Doctrine of Repentance in general, they deſcended to the Particulars, and told their Hearers what New Diſpoſitions of Heart, and Amendments of Life were neceſſary for all Men in general; and for the diverſe Ranks and Stations of Men in particular, as they had occaſion to Addreſs them.

This Sermon on the Mount ſeems to be particularly levelled againſt the Common Indiſpoſitions of Heart, and Errours of Life, which they were guilty of who looked for the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; for in it our Saviour acquaints the People and his Diſciples who are the Bleſſed Perſons who ſhall be admitted to that Kingdom; namely not the Covetous and Ambitious; but *the Poor in Spirit:* Not the Luxurious and Licentious, but the *ſerious, Penitent Mourners:* Not the fierce and haughty but *the Meek and Lowly:* Not they who gaped after

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and hoped to poſſeſs themſelves of their Neighbours Eſtates by Unjuſt Conqueſt; but they who ſtudied an exact *Honeſty* and *Uprightneſs* in all their Dealings: Not the Cruel and Hard-hearted, but *The Merciful and Charitable*; not the Leud and Unclean, but *The Pure in Heart:* Not the Fighting and Contentious, but *The Quiet and Peaceable*; not the Perſecuters, but *The Perſecuted for Chriſt's ſake and their Duty.* So that all the Beatitudes are the ſetting up of ſo many quite contrary Diſpoſitions of Mind to thoſe they were prepoſſeſſed with; and only more Particular Inſtances of the General Doctrine, that they were *to repent, becauſe the Kingdom of Heaven,* or the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah was at Hand.*

But now to come to this particular Beatitude; *Bleſſed are they that Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled.* In theſe Words we have two Things diſtinctly propoſed to our Conſideration.

1. A Virtue recommended. *Bleſſed are they who Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs.*

2. The particular Felicity promiſed to the Practiſers of this Virtue; *For they ſhall be filled.*

Neither of them is without its Difficulty; And becauſe I apprehend this Text is not rightly underſtood, neither by the Generality of Readers nor Interpreters, I muſt requeſt your more unprejudicate and

and ſerious Attention, while I open up what ſeems to me to be the true Senſe and Meaning of it.

1. To begin with the Virtue recommended which is *The Hungering and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs*; The Word *Righteouſneſs* is uſed in ſeveral Senſes in the *New Teſtament*, which has occaſioned ſome variety of Interpretations concerning the Meaning of it in this Place. I ſhall conſider them diſtinctly, that we may the better weigh them one againſt the other.

1. *Firſt* then, Righteouſneſs is ſometimes uſed in a borrowed Law ſenſe, not for Real but Imputed Righteouſneſs; when a Man is cleared in Judgment, whether by ſtanding upon his Juſtification, or by pleading his Pardon. This laſt is *The Righteouſneſs of Faith in Chriſt, by which we are juſtified before God*; and though it is not uſed in this ſenſe in the Goſpels, nor any where elſe in the *New Teſtament*, except in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles; yet becauſe this is a very deſirable thing and therefore a proper Object for our ſpiritual *Hunger and Thirſt*, it has been pitched upon as the ſenſe by ſundry well meaning Interpreters. But for two or three Reaſons I think it can't be the *Righteouſneſs* here meant. For. 1. We may Obſerve that when *Righteouſneſs* is to be underſtood in this borrowed Law ſenſe the Apoſtle generally adds ſome Words for the Explication of it; calling it *The Righteouſneſs of Faith*, or *The Righteouſneſs of God, or Righteouſneſs imputed*;

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but uſes not the Word alone, without ſome Addition, or previous or Concomitant Deſcription, from which we may know that it is to be determined to that Senſe. 2. It is not very probable that before the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith in *Chriſt* was as yet Preached or Taught, our Saviour would have uſed the Word *Righteouſneſs* in this borrowed Senſe; as knowing it muſt needs at that Time be altogether unintelligible to his Hearers. 3. I think it will appear plain to any attentive Reader, that it is not the Doctrine of *Juſtification*, but the Doctrine of *Sanctification* or *New Life*, which our Lord in theſe *Beatitudes* is endeavouring to inculcate upon his Diſciples and Auditory, as a neceſſary Prerequiſite, or Diſpoſition for the Evangelical State. And therefore it ſeems no way agreeable to the Scope of the Place, to recommend as yet the Doctrine of *Chriſt*'s Imputed Righteouſneſs.

The Word *Righteouſneſs* then I judge muſt be taken here in a Moral Senſe. But even thus, it is uſed wider or narrower in the *Holy Scriptures*. For ſometimes by *Righteouſneſs* is meant that *Univerſal Righteouſneſs*, conſiſting in a ſincere Endeavour to comply with the whole Duty of Man: And ſometimes the particular Virtue of *Juſtice*, which gives every Man his due. Now it is the *firſt* of theſe which Interpreters moſt commonly take to be meant in this Place. And according to them, the Meaning of the Words *Bleſſed are they that Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled;*

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is as if our Lord had ſaid; Bleſſed are they who have an earneſt deſire after Holineſs, for they ſhall not miſs of their Aim; but ſhall certainly attain what they ſo earneſtly long for. But though this is a true Doctrine, and a very pious Senſe, yet when I conſider the Scope of the Place and the Context, I muſt be of Opinion againſt the greater number of Interpreters, that by *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs* here is meant the particular Virtue of *Juſtice* or *Honeſty*; and that by *Being filled* or *ſatisfyed* is meant their having enough, or their enjoying a good Competency of the Bleſſings of this World; or in ſhort that their Honeſty ſhall not impoveriſh them; but that it ſhall prove the beſt way to encreaſe and preſerve their Eſtates. My reaſons for this Interpretation are theſe Three. 1. All the other Beatitudes are particular Virtues; and therefore it is moſt probable that this δικαιοσύνη, which may very properly be rendered *Juſtice*, is a particular Virtue too. 2. This better anſwers our Saviour's Scope and intent, which was to correct the bad Diſpoſitions of Mind his Hearers were under with relation to the Evangelical State. Now one notorious bad Diſpoſition of Mind they were under was, that they expected by the way of Fighting and Conqueſt to invade other Mens Poſſeſſions; The Covetouſneſs of this Temper our Saviour had corrected in another Beatitude, where he recommends *Poverty in Spirit*; and the Injuſtice of it he reprehends here. 3. Here is a great Catalogue of Chriſtian Virtues enumerated

in theſe *Eight Beatitudes*; Now how improbable is it that *one* of the *eight* ſhould comprehend *the whole?* Beſides, let it be tried in other places of the *New Teſtament*, where there is any Enumeration of particular Virtues; and it will be found that wherever δικαιοσύνη, the Word here rendered *Righteouſneſs*, is brought in, it is by common conſent of Interpreters underſtood to be the particular Virtue of *Juſtice*. I ſhall quote two or three of theſe Catalogues, beſides this of my Text, where this of *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs* makes a part; and in both theſe it is the particular Virtue of *Juſtice*, that is meant and recommended. The *firſt* is 1. Tim. vi. 11. *But thou O Man of God flee theſe things*, (He had been ſpeaking of the Sins of Covetouſneſs) and then he adds, *and follow after Righteouſneſs, Godlineſs, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekneſs.* Where we ſee he recommends to *Timothy* ſix Virtues, as oppoſite to Covetouſneſs; and *Righteouſneſs*, (that is *Juſtice*) at the head of them. The *ſecond* is 2. Tim. ii. 22. where diſſwading from Youthful Luſts, among ſome other he recommends this Virtue. *Flee alſo Youthful Luſts*, ſays he, *but follow Righteouſneſs, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart*, I might obſerve the ſame of the Word δικαίους which is rendered *Righteous* or *Juſt* as Tit. i. 8. Among the Qualifications of a Chriſtian Biſhop it is required that he be *Sober, Juſt, Holy, and Temperate.* Now is there not in theſe *eight Beatitudes* as great a Catalogue of Virtues as is enu-

enumerated in any of the other paſſages, of which Catalogue this is but one? In theſe other paſſages it is underſtood in the Senſe of the particular Virtue of *Juſtice*; and why not in this for the ſame reaſons? I conclude then, that when our Saviour ſaith here, *Bleſſed are they that Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs*, or *Juſtice*, the Senſe is, as if he had ſaid, Ye imagine the followers of the *Meſſiah* ſhall Conquer great Cities and Countreys, and that by no other Right or Title, beſides that of the Sword, they ſhall invade the Wealth and Poſſeſſions of other Men; and ye are puſht on with as eager Deſires after theſe things, as an Hungry Man hath after Meat, or a Thirſty Man after Drink; but ye are under a great miſtake; The Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* abhors every thing that is wrongful or unjuſt, and therefore if ye deſign to be good Subjects of that Kingdom, inſtead of longing after your Neighbours Goods and Poſſeſſions, deſire above all things honeſt Hearts and Souls, free from all ſiniſter Byaſs and Affection; and that ye may have both the judgment to know and the Inclination to do right and juſtice to all Mankind. This I take to be the right meaning of the Virtue recommended. And now ſince I am upon paraphraſing our Saviour's Meaning of the Virtue, I will add too the Meaning of the Promiſe annexed; *For they ſhall be filled*: Which after St. *Chryſoſtome* upon the place, I take to be, as if he had ſaid, In walking juſtly and honeſtly, ye ſhall be ſufficiently

provided for as to all worldly Neceſſaries: Your Honeſty ſhall not impoveriſh you; but ye ſhall have ſufficient and enough to ſupply all your Temporal Wants; beſides the affluence of all Bleſſings in Heaven.

The Duty then here recommended I take to be a great Love of Juſtice; *The Hungering and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs.* I purpoſely chooſe to call it by the name of *Juſtice*, For, though the Word *Righteouſneſs* ſometimes may comprehend all that is any Way due to our Neighbour, even Relief in his wants, as well as his Legal Juſt Demands, yet here I judge it muſt be Interpreted in a more limited Senſe, only for the Duty of *Juſtice*, and that becauſe *Mercy*, the other great Branch of our Duty to our Neighbour, has a diſtinct Conſideration in the very next *Beatitude.* And I call it a great Love of Juſtice; becauſe it is here reſembled to thoſe moſt quick and pungent deſires of *Hunger and Thirſt*, which have a vehement tendency to Satisfaction.

But that I may afford this Virtue a clearer Conſideration; I ſhall diſtinctly, but as briefly as ſuch an ample Subject will admit, conſider both the Object *Juſtice*, and the Act of *Hungering and Thirſting after it.*

As to the Object, *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs*, it is of a very large Extent, as reaching to all thoſe Virtues, by which our Neighbour has any Right to claim from us, or not to be injured by us. And this

this in ſome reſpects will reach further than even the large Duties of the whole Second Table of the Law; For by giving a bad Example in Tranſgreſſing the Duties of the *Firſt* Table of the Law, which relate to our duty to God, we may be guilty of a great piece of Injuſtice to our Neighbour, in ſeducing him from his Duty, and ſo in ruining his Soul to all Eternity. The ſame may be ſaid of our Duty to our Selves; for though every Tranſgreſſion of *that* is not directly an Injuſtice to our Neighbour, yet if by ſo doing we either give our Neighbour a bad Example, or by diſordering our Selves, we unfit and indiſpoſe our Selves for diſcharging our duty to our Neighbour, we become guilty of Injuſtice toward him.

But more particularly the duty of *Juſtice* relates to thoſe large Duties of the *Second* Table of the Law, wherein we ſtand bound to our Neighbour in ſeveral Capacities; whether we come to the knowledge of them by the Light and Law of Nature, (which is not ſo much blinded as to *them*, as it is in the duties of Piety relating to Almighty God) or by the Law of *Moſes* with the Explication of the Prophets in the *Old Teſtament*; or by the more perfect Laws of *Chriſt*, and the Explications of the *Apoſtles* in the *New*: Or even by the Laws and Conſtitutions of Kingdoms and Common Wealths, and other legal Societies or Authority, whether Civil or Eccleſiaſtical. For all theſe, in ſo far as they are not contrary to the

Laws of God, are approved and commanded to be obſerved by the Chriſtian Inſtitution; as St. *Peter* oberves 1. Pet. ii. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lords ſake.* And further, all Good, Laudable and Friendly Cuſtoms and Practices are in general recommended. *Ph.* iv. 8. *Finally Brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are Honeſt,* (that is *decent* or *honourable*) *whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely* (or *friendly*, προσφιλῆ) *whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any Virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.* So that there is nothing due to our Neighbour, either by the Law of Nature, or by the Poſitive Laws of God, or by the Laws of the Land, or by any Friendly Laudable Cuſtom or Practice, but this Virtue of *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs*, as explained by the Chriſtian Religion, requires it to be payed him; For it would not have us fall ſhort in any thing, which by any of theſe Titles is juſtly our Neighbour's due. *Render therefore to all their dues: Tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no Man any thing but to love one another: For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law.* Rom. xiii. 7, & 8.

I ſhould much exceed the Bounds of a Sermon, if I went about to deſcribe to you all the particular Branches of this Duty of *Juſtice*, as it relates to the Soul and Body, the Goods and Good Name of our

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Neighbour; nay if I did but deſcribe what is due to all Men in General, without entring into that Great Body of Duty reſulting from the particular Relations of Magiſtrates and Subjects, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children; Maſters and Servants; Paſtors and People; Creditors and Debtors; Buyers and Sellers; thoſe that commit a Truſt and thoſe who receive it; thoſe that oblige others and thoſe who are obliged by them; and all the other numerous Relations of Life. I ſhall only tell you that the Chriſtian Religion is ſo far from diſcouraging, or even from neglecting and overlooking theſe Matters of *Morality* and Common *Juſtice* and *Honeſty*, that it carefully recommends them in the ampleſt Manner; that is, not only as the beſt Legiſlators and beſt Magiſtrates, and beſt Neighbours would require; but as we our ſelves would wiſh to be dealt by our ſelves, in the like Circumſtances; which will certainly take in the utmoſt, that not only *Law* and *ſtrict Juſtice*, but what the largeſt *Equity* and *good Conſcience* would dictate to be due to our Neighbour.

I ſhall add but one thing more relating to this *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs*; which is, that perhaps it is not only our *Own Juſtice*, as it is a Virtue in our ſelves, which we are to underſtand here to be aimed at, and ſo ardently wiſhed for; but likewiſe the *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs* of *Others*. We are to be ſo great *Lovers of Juſtice*, as not only to abſtain from all Acts of Injuſtice our ſelves; but to wiſh

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and endeavour to the utmoſt of our Power to promote Juſtice and Righteouſneſs among others; and in our ſeveral Stations to prevent or remedy all Frauds and Oppreſſions, and all manner of Injuſtice, Extortion, or Exaction in the World.

So much for *Juſtice* or *Righteouſneſs*; which is the Object of this Duty in my Text. I proceed next to conſider the Act of *Hungering and Thirſting*. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs.* By this *Hungering and Thirſting* I underſtand an high degree of Love and Deſire; as if he had ſaid, Bleſſed are they who have a prevalent Love and Deſire after Juſtice or Honeſty in all Actions, Dealings, Laws, Judgments, Decrees, and Tranſactions whatſoever. But perhaps this may be thought an unſuitable Expreſſion, if apply'd to this particular Virtue; *Juſtice* and *Honeſty* in our Actions not being a Vertue ſo hard to learn, that we need to have ſuch longing Deſires after it. For anſwering this Doubt, and to clear the Propriety of the Phraſe in the Text, I deſire theſe few Things may be conſidered. 1. That as for the Propriety of the Expreſſion of *Hungering and Thirſting after Juſtice*, it ſeems to me to be choſen from, and levelled at that wicked and unjuſt Inclination of Mind, they had after other Men's Eſtates, of which they expected the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* would put them in Poſſeſſion, which Covetous Inclination is well deſcribed by *Hungering and Thirſting*. As if he had ſaid, Bleſſed are they who inſtead of being Hungry

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and Thirſty after their Neighbours Eſtates, by the way of Fraud and Unjuſt Conqueſt, deſire above all things to wrong no Body; but what they get, to get it fairly and honeſtly. So that the Phraſe of *Hungering and Thirſting* being transferred from the unjuſt and oppreſſive Deſire and Purſuit of our Neighbours Wealth, (of which it is a very lively Deſcription) to the direct Oppoſite of it, the Love of Juſtice, is very proper and ſignificant; and ſuch elegant *Antitheſes* between Virtue and Vice the Scripture frequently uſes, as *Jer.* ix. 3. where having ſaid that *They bent their Tongues like their Bow for Lies*; he adds, *But they are not valiant for the Truth*. So (*a*) *Fear not them who kill the Body, but I will forwarn you whom you ſhall fear*. So (*b*) *Lay not up for your ſelves Treaſures upon Earth, but lay up Treaſures in Heaven*. So here, as if he had ſaid, Do not thirſt after other Men's Eſtates, which ye muſt very wrongfully come at; but hunger and thirſt after an honeſt Heart and Soul, which will keep you from all ſuch unjuſt Courſes. 2. Conſider that though *Juſtice* and *Honeſty* ſeems an eaſy Virtue, and one of the things which are in our own Power; and therefore not ſo properly the Object of our earneſt Deſires, yet there are really conſiderable Difficulties in it, the overcoming of which it may be very reaſonable to wiſh for, ſuch as theſe

(*a*) Luke 12. 4. (*b*) Mat. 6. 19.

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following. (1.) Truth and Juſtice is often difficult to diſcern, which ſide it lies on. And we want a great deal of Knowledge and Conſideration, and Freedom from Prejudice and Partiality, and a great deal of God's good Conduct and Direction, to find it out; and therefore it may properly be the Object of our Deſire. (2.) Even when we have Knowledge and Conſideration enough, to diſcern *Truth* from *Falſhood*, and *Right* from *Wrong*; we are often inſenſibly carried by ſo ſtrong Byaſſes of Worldly Intereſt, Self-love, and urgent Neceſſity, that we cannot eaſily incline our Wills to follow the Rectitude of our Judgments; and in that Caſe with the hardened *Jews* having Eyes we ſee not, and having Ears we hear not, and having Hearts we underſtand not; and if there is not then a ſuperiour Inclination to Juſtice, to conquer all thoſe Prejudices and Byaſſes of Self-love and Worldly Intereſt, our Underſtandings, like a bribed Judge, will be apt to give Sentence on the wrong Side. And therefore we have great Reaſon to wiſh for this ſtrong Propenſity and Superiour Inclination to *Juſtice*, which like *Hunger and Thirſt* may give us no reſt, till we ſatisfy it. (3.) Conſider that if it is not only our own *Juſtice* we are to deſire; but a General Prevalency of *Juſtice* and *Righteouſneſs* in the World; this is moſt properly a thing to be longed for, as being exceedingly wanted in the World, and not eaſily in the power of any Man to compaſs. So that the Expreſſion of *Hungering and Thirſting af-*

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ter Juſtice is ſtill very proper; and upon all theſe Accounts we have Reaſon to believe, that this prevailing Love and Regard to Juſtice both in our Selves and Others is the Virtue to which we are here exhorted.

So much for Explication of the *Firſt* Part of my Text which recommends the Virtue of *Juſtice*. *Bleſſed are they that Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs.* I find Time will not allow my entering on the *Second* Part, which deſcribes *the Felicity* of ſuch Perſons that *They ſhall be filled, or ſatisfied.* I muſt wait for a further Opportunity for affording *it* a due Conſideration.

I ſhall only add a ſhort Word by way of Exhortation to *Three* Sorts of Perſons for the more effectual ſecuring the Duty of *Juſtice* or *Honeſty* that I have been deſcribing.

1. My *Firſt* Advice is to ſome who neglect the Study of *Juſtice*, as if there were little or nothing in it; as if it were a Thing too low for the high Diſpenſation of the Goſpel; a meer Matter of Form; or a thing that is to be made ſubſervient to our Worldly Intereſts. For if we had not ſuch a Mean Opinion of it, how is it poſſible that it ſhould be governed ſo much by Party and Intereſt, and Selfiſh and Partial Conſiderations, as it is in the World? Surely we either fancy *Juſtice* to be nothing antecedently to our Sentences; or we take not ſufficient Pains to find it out; or if we have any Notions of it, they are quickly drowned in the more prevalent Con-

Conſiderations of Party, or Intereſt, and By-aims and Advantages for our Selves and our Friends and Families. Now what I offer is, that *Juſtice* is a Noble Virtue, and ought to be ſet above all theſe By-Regards. And it is a Virtue, which the Chriſtian Religion always recommends in the moſt Honourable Manner. Here we ſee it is aſſumed into the Number of the *Beatitudes*, which are the chief Chriſtian Graces and Virtues. And in many Paſſages of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, it is recommended as a Principal Virtue neceſſary for *their* Function. I have already in this Diſcourſe quoted three ſeveral Places out of thoſe Epiſtles, where *Righteouſneſs* or *Juſtice* is recommended to *them*: St. *Paul* thought it neceſſary to inſiſt on this, even to ſo good Men that (*a*) *Nothing ſhould be done by Partiality*. Let us not imagine, becauſe *Juſtice* is a Virtue which the very Light of Nature teaches a *Turk* or an *Heathen*, that therefore it is below the regard of *a Chriſtian*. He knows but little of *Chriſtianity*, who knows not that it eſtabliſhes, and advances towards greater Perfection, all good *Morals*; and cenſures and condemns thoſe who neglecting theſe, would place Religion in Matters of Form and Ceremony. (*b*) *Wo to you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites*, ſays our Saviour, *For ye pay Tythe of Mint, and Anïſe, and Cummin, and have omitted the more weighty Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and*

(*a*) 1 Tim. 5. 21. (*b*) Mat. 23. 23.

Faith.

Faith. Let us aſſure our ſelves then, that he is but a very ſorry *Chriſtian*, and deſerves not the Name, who has not the Moral Honeſty and Juſtice of an *Heathen.* He that cannot be depended on for the Truth of his Words, nor for the Fidelity of his Oaths and Promiſes, nor for the Fairneſs of his Accounts, nor for the Uprightneſs of his Votes, nor for the Honeſty of his Work, nor for the Faithful Diſcharge of a Truſt; He that will lye, cheat, equivocate, oppreſs, exact, or forſwear, and contrive Snares to entrap his honeſt Neighbour for a little Gain; how will he ever come up to the higher Precept of *Doing by others, as we would be done by our ſelves?*

2. My *Second* Advice ſhall be to them who are ſo far convinced of the Duty of *Juſtice* and *Honeſty*, that they are reſolved to ſet about it. And to them I muſt recommend the Practice of ſeveral other Chriſtian Virtues, without which it will be very hard, if not impoſſible, to preſerve their Honeſty. I ſhall but juſt name the chief of thoſe that are neceſſary to this End; becauſe I have not time to inſiſt upon them. (1.) If ye intend to be *Juſt and Honeſt*, ſtudy *The Fear of God*; for if ye are Honeſt only out of regard to Human Laws, or Reputation, this is no *Honeſty* at all, but the *Fear of Men and Self-love*; and beſides, without the Fear of God ye will find abundance of Opportunities for Diſhoneſty, which either Human Laws have not provided againſt, or Human Care and Authority can

can not, or is not willing to diſcover. (2.) If we would be Honeſt, it is neceſſary to avoid *Covetouſneſs* and *Ambition*; and as we are often adviſed by our Religion, not to aim at Great Things in the World; but *Having Food and Raiment*, that is the Neceſſaries of Life, *Let us be therewith content*: that ſo we may lie under no Temptation from a boundleſs Love of Wealth or Greatneſs, to do Unjuſt or Diſhoneſt Things. Not but that if God adds Wealth to our honeſt Endeavours, we are thankfully to accept it, and to make good Uſe of it; but never to covet it, or to be byaſſed from the ſtreight Rule of *Honeſty* from the Conſideration of it. (3.) He that would be *Juſt* and *Honeſt*, ſhould be Diligent in the buſineſs of his Lawful Calling; for Idleneſs brings Want, and *Want* is a great Temptation to Injuſtice and Diſhoneſty. (4.) If ye would be *Honeſt*, let me recommend another Virtue very friendly to Honeſty; that is *Frugality*; avoiding carefully Drunkenneſs, Luxury, Prodigality, too High Living, Deep Gaming, and all other Waſtful not only *Vices*, but *Faſhions* and *Cuſtoms*, which engage you in an higher Expence, than your Calling and Income, and the Neceſſary Proviſion for your Families with Honeſty can afford. (5.) Beware of *Litigiouſneſs*. which is a great Enemy to Juſtice and Honeſty, both as it drives us upon taking all Advantages of our Neighbour; and as it brings our ſelves to Poverty, and ſo tempts to diſhoneſty. (6.) There is another much better natured Qualification,

cation, but very Dangerous on the ſame Account; and that is *Suretyſhip*; of which we ought all of us to be at leaſt ſo far cautious, as not to venture upon it to that degree, as to incapacitate our ſelves to pay our own juſt Debts; and to defray our own neceſſary Expences.

3. The *laſt* Advice I have to offer on this Subject is to them who are Conſcious to themſelves of having dealt unjuſtly or diſhoneſtly by their Neighbour in any Matter; And it is in ſhort that in the firſt Place they repent of the Sin before God; and in the next Place that they make *Reparation* and *Reſtitution* to their Neighbour to the utmoſt of their Power. We ought to have ſuch a prevalent Propenſity to Juſtice, expreſſed here by *Hungering and Thirſting after it*, that no Conſideration either of Shame or Poverty ſhould keep us from doing right to thoſe we have injured.

Several of theſe Things are of that Importance, that they deſerve to have been more fully proſecuted: If I had not already too much treſpaſſed on your Patience. Now God give us all Grace, that denying Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts we may live ſoberly, righteouſly, *&c.*

SERMON VIII.

MAT. V. 6.

Bleſſed are they which do Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs: **for they ſhall be filled.**

The Second Sermon on this Text.

AT the laſt Occaſion I diſcourſed from the *Firſt* part of this Text, of the Duty of *Hungering and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs*. My deſign is at preſent from the *Second* Part of it, to conſider *the Promiſe* annexed to this Duty, *For they ſhall be filled or ſatisfied.* The Duty of *Hungering and Thirſting after Righteouſneſs* I interpreted to be *a great Love of Juſtice*, in Oppoſition to that wrong Notion our Saviour's Diſciples, and the Multitudes had of the *Meſ-*

Meſſiah's Kingdom; that his Followers were by no other right, than that of Conqueſt and the Power of the Sword, to enter upon the Wealth and Poſſeſſions of other Men. In Oppoſition, I ſay, to this falſe Notion, our Saviour here teaches that *a Love of Juſtice and Honeſty* is a Principal Qualification for the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; And for their Encouragement, that they ſhould not need to fear their *Juſtice* and *Honeſty* would ſo hamper them, as to deprive them of the Means of carrying on the great Deſigns of that Kingdom; for that God would ſo bleſs their juſt and honeſt Endeavours, that they ſhould be fully ſatisfied as to all that was neceſſary or convenient for them. For ſupporting this Senſe, beſides the Authority of St. *Chryſoſtome* upon the Place, I deſire the Meaning of the Word χορτάζω in the Text, which we tranſlate *to fill*, may be throughly conſidered; for it ſignifies properly *to feed to a Satisfaction of Hunger*.

The Point of Doctrine then here taught in this Promiſe, I have read, and which I intend as the Subject of the following Diſcourſe, is this, "That "Men of Honeſt Principles, and true and juſt in their "Dealings, need not fear that they ſhall be reduced "to Want by their Honeſty; for that God will take "Care in his good Providence that they ſhall be ſup-"plied to their Content and Satisfaction." This is a very Comfortable *Promiſe*, and were it duly minded and believed, would be a great Inducement to

Truth and Fidelity in all our Words, and to Uprightneſs in all our Actions.

In ſpeaking to this Subject, I ſhall confine my ſelf to theſe two Heads of Diſcourſe.

1. By way of Explication, I will endeavour to find out and deſcribe, what Sort of Supply it is, which is promiſed here to Juſt and Honeſt Men, under theſe Words; *For they ſhall be filled.*

2. I will endeavour from Scripture and Reaſon to make it out, that this Promiſe ſhall be made good.

I *Firſt* then, as to the Supply here promiſed to Juſt and Honeſt Men; *That they ſhall be filled, or ſatisfied*; we are not to believe that by this Promiſe is meant a great deal of Superfluous Wealth; for this *Filling* or *Satisfying* has Relation to Men's *Hunger*; that is, to their *real* Wants and Neceſſities, not their *imaginary* ones. To take ſome Help then from the Supply of Hunger, to which the Promiſe in my Text doth allude, it is not neceſſary we know towards the ſatisfying of *Hunger*, that there be ſet before us a great Variety of Diſhes, that we may eat a little of one and a little of another. This is more the demand of Luxury than of natural Hunger; Such great Variety is rather to provoke an *Artificial*, than to ſatisfy a *Natural* Appetite. And if the

the Taſting a great Variety of Diſhes is not neceſſary for the Supply of Hunger, far leſs is it neceſſary for that end, that there be a great Number of Superfluous Diſhes, not touched at all, but preſented only for Show and Ornament; like the Miſer's Wealth, who has no further Uſe of it than the ſatisfying of his Sight. Now to accommodate this to the Buſineſs in Hand, we are not to imagine that in order to the fulfilling the Promiſe in the Text, we are either to be ſupplied with a great Variety of Luxurious Superfluities of Life, to pleaſe a nice dainty Palat, which will not be contented with good, ſubſtantial, wholſom Food; or with a great deal of Superfluous Wealth, more than ever we ſhall uſe or have occaſion for; neither of theſe being any way neceſſary towards the true Happineſs of Life. What is it then that is promiſed to the Lovers of *Juſtice* and *Honeſty*, under theſe Words, *They ſhall be filled or ſatisfied?* I anſwer, chiefly theſe *Three* Things, which are all very valuable Bleſſings.

1. A *Competency* or Sufficiency of Outward Bleſſings.

2. A *Contentment* or Satisfaction of Mind with our Lot and Portion, be what it will.

3. *An Heart to uſe and enjoy the Bleſſings God beſtows upon us*, for the ſeveral Uſes and Occaſions of Life. Theſe *Three*, and no more, I take to be neceſſary towards the *Satisfaction* promiſed

in my Text. They deſerve a more particular Conſideration.

1. The *Firſt* Thing I take to be promiſed in theſe Words, **For they ſhall be filled**, is a *Competency*; that is, ſuch a Portion of the good Things of this Life, as God knows to be requiſite for every ones Occaſions and Circumſtances. This is not alike in all; for as there are ſeveral Ranks and Orders and Degrees among Men, ſome Superiour, others Inferiour; Some to Command, Some to Obey; Some having a great Charge of Children, and Some few or none; Some requiring more, Some leſs, towards the Honeſt and Decent Diſcharge of their ſeveral Functions; it is not to be underſtood by this *Competency* of Worldly Good Things promiſed to Men of Probity and Honeſty, that God will raiſe them all to the Higheſt Rank of Mankind, and bleſs them with ſuch Affluence and Abundance, as is requiſite for Perſons in thoſe Higheſt Stations; though it is often ſeen that *Honeſty* and *Diligence* promote Men to Stations of the *firſt* Rank. (a) *Seeſt thou a Man diligent in his Buſineſs, he ſhall ſtand before Kings, he ſhall not ſtand before mean Men:* Saith *Solomon*. But this is not the Thing here promiſed; it is only promiſed that *They ſhall be Filled*; which has Reference to their Capacity and Circumſtances. A

(a) Prov. 22. 29.

Pint-

Pint-Pot, though it holds not ſo much, is capable of being filled as well as a Gallon. So when a Man in a lower Sphere has enough to ſupply his low Occaſions, he is as truly filled, and ſatisfied, as a Prince, or Great Man with a Thouſand Times his Income; who has likewiſe uſually a Thouſand Times more Occaſion for it.

2. The *Second* Thing I take to be promiſed in theſe Words, *They ſhall be filled, or ſatisfied*, is a Contentment or Satisfaction of Mind with their Circumſtances. For without this there is no Outward *Competency* whatſoever can be ſaid to fill or ſatisfy the Mind. And this is a Bleſſing no way confined to the more Affluent and Plentiful Fortunes; but diffuſed through all; nay more frequently to be found in Poor Cottages, than in Rich Palaces. And a great Bleſſing it is, when God gives a Man Grace to ſuit his Mind to his Fortune, and contentedly to acquieſce in his holy Will and Pleaſure; contrary to the Temper of the Covetous and Ambitious, who are never eaſy under their preſent Circumſtances; but are always reſtleſly aiming at further and higher Meaſures of Wealth and Greatneſs.

3. A *Third* Thing neceſſary for compleating this Promiſe in my Text, is an Heart to uſe and enjoy the Bleſſings God beſtows upon us, for the ſeveral Uſes and Occaſions of Life; for without this, a *Competency* of Outward Good Things would be no Bleſſing, and of no Uſe. It would be only, as if under

the Notion of preſenting me with a Sum of Money, One ſhould count out indeed the Money into Bags; and ſhould lock them up in my Cheſt; but withal ſhould put the Key in his own Pocket, and tell me that I ſhould have no Acceſs to it, but by his Leave; and if my Wants were ever ſo preſſing, that I ſhould not touch one Farthing of it. So that without this *Heart to uſe our Competency*, we ſhould want what we have, as well as what we have not; conſequently could never have our Wants ſupplied, or our Deſires filled and ſatisfied, which is the Promiſe in the Text.

So much for the *Firſt* Thing I propoſed to conſider, namely what ſort of Supply it is, which is here promiſed to Juſt, Honeſt Men.

II. I proceed next, as I propoſed, to make it out from Scripture and Reaſon, that this Promiſe of a *Competency* ſhall be made good to the *Juſt*, *Honeſt* Man.

To begin with *The Text*, it is true there are a great many Interpreters, who expound this *Filling* or *Satisfying*, to relate to Spiritual and Eternal Bleſſings; but there is great reaſon both from the meaning of the Word χορτάζω, which ſignifies *to feed to a Satisfaction of Hunger*; and from the nature of this *Promiſe*, being particularly adapted to the duty of *Juſtice*, to which it is Annexed, to believe that it is a *Competency* of *Outward* Bleſſings, which is here promiſed. Upon occaſion of this Obſervation, I am tempted to digreſs a little, and to

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ſay ſomething in general, of the Promiſes annexed to the ſeveral Duties in theſe *Beatitudes*. It has been run away with as a Currant Notion, that all thoſe Promiſes are to be reſolved into *One*; that they are nothing elſe but Eternal Life under different Notions and Acceptations; whereas perhaps to any one that will enquire more diligently into the nature of them, they will all appear as diſtinct, as the Duties to which they are annexed, and all of them ſomething immediately reſulting from the nature of that particular Duty, to which they are joined. Thus in the *Firſt Beatitude*, it is foretold and promiſed that the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, that is, the Church of *Chriſt*, ſhould conſiſt of Men whoſe Hearts and Affections were not ſet on the World; which is a very particular thing, the ſame that St. *Paul* obſerves in theſe Words 1. Cor. i. 26. *For ye ſee your calling Brethren how that not many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called.* And St. James ii. 5. *Hath not God choſen the Poor of this World, rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom?* In the Promiſe annexed to the *Second Beatitude*, the Inward Comforts which follow a State of Penitence are pointed at. In the *Third Beatitude*, the Quiet and Peaceable Enjoyment of what they have, is promiſed to the *Meek*. In the *Fourth Beatitude*, which is that of our Text, a *Competency* is promiſed to *Honeſty*. In the *Fifth*, Mercy both from God and Man is promiſed to the *Merciful*. In the *Sixth*, Acquaintance with God and Divine Things is promiſed to

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the Pure in Heart. In the *Seventh*, the Honour of being owned as the Children of God is annexed to the *Peace-makers*. And in the *Laſt*, Proportionable Degrees of Happineſs in Heaven are promiſed to them, who ſuffer for *Chriſt*, or their Duty here upon Earth. I have not time to prove particularly the Truth of this Obſervation; only in general it is much more probable, that our Saviour, who uſes not to be guilty of Tautologies, would not have *Eight* Times on end repeated the ſame thing; beſides that the Expreſſions are all different, according to the different Relation they have to the Duties enjoined. Particularly in this Promiſe here, our Saviour ſeems to obviate an Objection, which they tacitly harboured in their Breaſts, as if being but Poor themſelves they knew not how to furniſh out ſufficiently for the Charge and Expences of the *Meſſiah's* Kingdom, without invading the Eſtates of other Men. To prevent this Conceit, our Saviour acquaints them, that if they ſtudied *Juſtice* and *Honeſty*, they ſhould not need to fear want; for that God would ſupply them with whatever was neceſſary, or convenient for them.

And now to ſhew you that this Doctrine is countenanced both by *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, I ſhall briefly draw an Argument from both. And *Firſt* from *Scripture*. The *Old Teſtament* abounds in Promiſes of this kind, which are all very Applicable to the Goſpel times; eſpecially when the Church is not under Perſecution, but has Kings

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for her Nurſing Fathers, and Queens for her Nurſing Mothers. I ſhall quote ſome of the plaineſt to this Purpoſe. The Pſalmiſt ſays Pſ. xxxvii. 3. *Truſt in the Lord and do good, ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed.* What is this, but the ſame with my Text, *They ſhall be filled.* So *verſe* 25. of the ſame Pſalm, *I have been Young, and now am Old; yet have I not ſeen the Righteous forſaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.* And Solomon, Pro. xiii. 25. *The Righteous eateth to the ſatisfying of his Soul; but the Belly of the wicked ſhall want.* Many ſuch Obſervations doth Solomon make in that Book, as *Chap.* iii. 33. *The Curſe of the Lord is in the Houſe of the wicked: But he bleſſeth the Habitation of the Juſt.* And Chap. x. 3. *The Lord will not ſuffer the Soul of the Righteous to famiſh: But he caſteth away the Subſtance of the Wicked.* And xiii. 11. *Wealth gotten by Vanity ſhall be diminiſhed; but he that gathereth by Labour ſhall increaſe. Wealth gotten by Vanity*, that is, by Fraud and diſhoneſt Courſes; which is ſet in Oppoſition to gathering by Honeſt Labour and Induſtry. I ſhall quote but one Paſſage more out of the *Old Teſtament*, it is Iſ. xxxiii. 15. *He that walketh Righteouſly and ſpeaketh Uprightly, he that deſpiſeth the gain of Oppreſſions, and ſhaketh his Hands from holding of Bribes, that ſtoppeth his Ears from hearing of Blood, and ſhutteth his Eyes from ſeeing Evil; he ſhall dwell on high: His Place of Defence ſhall be the Munitions of Rocks, Bread ſhall be given him, his Waters ſhall be ſure.* Where by

Bread

Bread and Water, or Victuals and Drink, is ſignified this *Competency* of Outward Bleſſings; and by the *Munitions of Rocks for his place of Defence*, is ſignified his Shelter and Security.

Now that theſe ſame Bleſſings belong to Juſt Honeſt Men under the Goſpel too, will appear both from the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing, as we ſhall preſently ſee; and from the like Argument uſed by our Saviour and the Apoſtles in the *New Teſtament*. *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and the Righteouſneſs thereof; and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you* Mat. vi. 33. And Heb. xiii. 5. *Let your Converſation be without Covetouſneſs; and be content with ſuch things as ye have: for he hath ſaid I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* He draws an Argument from ſuch a Promiſe as we have been ſpeaking of in the *Old Teſtament*, and applies it in the *New*. And by the ſame Logick or way of Reaſoning, we may argue that theſe Promiſes I juſt now quoted out of the *Old Teſtament*, and all the other General Promiſes there made, will be likewiſe performed in the *New*. I could bring many more Quotations to this purpoſe; but theſe are ſufficient to prove what I brought them for, and ſomething more; as containing not only Promiſes of a *Competency* to the Righteous Honeſt Perſons *themſelves*; but likewiſe a Bleſſing to *their Houſe* and *Poſterity*.

And as the Holy Scriptures are plain on this Subject, ſo if we examine the Matter by the rules of

of Sober right Reaſon, we ſhall find it will teach us the ſame Doctrine, that *Juſtice* and *Honeſty* in our Dealings is the ſureſt way to gard againſt Want, and to enjoy this *Competency* promiſed in my Text. For the better imprinting of which Truth in your Minds and Memories, there are theſe few things I would briefly offer to your Conſideration.

1. The *Firſt* is, that *Juſtice* and *Honeſty* contributes very much towards the Improvement of all the Faculties of the Soul; I mean, that it clears up the Underſtanding from that Miſt, which crooked dark Deſigns are apt to raiſe in it: That it preſerves the Rectitude of the Will, by freeing it from thoſe ſiniſter Byaſſes, which Diſhoneſt Deſigns give it; and that it keeps up a regularity in the Affections, by ſuffering no ſiniſter Deſign of Luſts or By-ends to diſorder them. It likewiſe preſerves the Conſcience from all Damps of Grief and Melancholy, which are the Natural and Infallible Conſequences of Unjuſt Deſigns and Actions. And by this Improvement of the Faculties, it makes a Man ſo much the Abler to diſcern, and ſo much the more Chearful, Active, and Diligent to Mind his Buſineſs. *Light is ſown for the Righteous*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *and Gladneſs for the upright in Heart*. Pſ. xcvii. 11.

2. As the *Honeſt* Man takes the beſt Courſe to improve his *Natural* Faculties, ſo he is the beſt diſpoſed to procure and receive the Aſſiſtances of *Su-*

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pernatual Grace; for being conſcious to himſelf of his ſincere upright Intentions, he can with good Aſſurance recommend his Affairs to Gods Bleſſing and Direction; whereas the Diſhoneſt Fraudulent Man dares not call for Gods Bleſſing upon his Wicked Deſigns, or if he does, he knows it is in vain to expect it. Now a Man who believes that he has God of his ſide, acts with another ſort of Life and Chearfulneſs, and with another Vigour and Reſolution, than he who knows he is alone in what he does; and that he may rather expect God's Curſe than his Bleſſing. *The Eyes of the Lord*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Cry. The Face of the Lord is againſt them that do Evil.* Pſ. xxxiv. 15, & 16.

3. The Honeſt Man is moſt likely to be kept in Buſineſs and Employ; For all Men, whatever they may be themſelves, love to find Honeſty in thoſe they deal with; and hate to be tricked and cheated. This is ſo true an Obſervation, that the greateſt Knaves and Cheats have no other way to get into Buſineſs, but by Counterfeiting Honeſty, and pretending to be what they are not. And if they happen to be diſcovered, as it is a thouſand to one but that they will, they are preſently blown upon, and diſcountenanced; and every one is cautious of having any further Dealings with ſuch a Perſon.

4. If the Honeſt Man wants Credit, which is a great Furtherance in Worldly Buſineſs; how eaſy a thing is it for him, after Experience of his Honeſt Courſes,

Courſes, to find enough, more than he is willing to make uſe of? Whereas the Diſhoneſt Man, ſo ſoon as he is known to be what he is, ſinks in his Credit, and carries on his Affairs very heavily without it.

5. The Upright Honeſt Man *walketh ſurely*, as *Solomon* obſerves. Prov. x. 9. He is not afraid of the Detection of his Servants, or the Confeſſions of his Accomplices and Aſſociates; when Inquiries after Bribery, Corruption, Villany and Miſdemeanours of all ſorts are ever ſo ſtrict, he is not daunted or caſt down, as being Conſcious to himſelf of his Uprightneſs and Innocence: Whereas the Unjuſt Man fears every thing, and is glad, when detected, to fly from *Juſtice*, or to diſgorge a great part of his ill gotten Wealth, that he may redeem the reſt, or perhaps may buy off his Life, which he has juſtly forfeited by his Crimes.

6. In all good Governments, ſuch as underſtand their own Intereſt, the Upright Honeſt Man ſtands much fairer for Preferment than the Knave. *Righteous Lips are the delight of Kings*, ſays Solomon, *and they love him that ſpeaketh right*. Prov. xvi. 13.

7. The Honeſt Man has this great Advantage, that the more and the longer he is known, ſo much the better is he Liked, and Truſted; ſo that his Reputation and his Wealth have a gradual Increaſe, as he comes to be better acquainted with Mankind, and they with him: He wants but a fair Introduction

duction into Buſineſs, to make his Fortune; and afterwards his Honeſty makes its own way, and will carry him thorow: Whereas it is quite otherwiſe with the Diſhoneſt Man; his Knavery trips up his Heels; and it is but for a Preſent Turn, at leaſt for a very ſhort time, that his Politicks are calculated. This likewiſe Solomon obſerved. *The Integrity of the Upright ſhall guide them; but the Perverſeneſs of Trangreſſors ſhall deſtroy them.* Prov. xi. 3. And again, *The Lip of truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever: But a lying Tongue is but for a Moment,* Prov. xii. 19.

8. *Laſtly,* It is obſerved of ill-gotten Wealth that it ſeldom thrives. Sometimes the Knave himſelf is detected, and fleeced; ſometimes his crooked Ways engage him in endleſs Law Suits, which conſume and exhauſt him; Sometimes with high Bribes he is obliged to buy his Peace; Sometimes his Accomplices and he fall out about parting the unrighteous Mammon. In ſhort there are infinite ways of Providence, by which Knaves are detected, and Honeſt Men righted. Then, whereas all Men are apt to pity an Honeſt Man, if he falls into Troubles thro' Misfortune, on the other Hand they have no Compaſſion on a Knave; he commonly ſinks under it, while the Honeſt Man creeps out. (a) *A juſt Man,* ſaith *Solomon, falleth ſeven times and riſeth up a-*

(a) Prov. 24. 16.

gain:

gain: but the Wicked ſhall fall into Miſchief. But if the diſhoneſt Man eſcapes in his own Time, his ill gotten Eſtate ſeldom thrives with his Heirs. It is true of him what *Solomon* ſays; *An Inheritance may be gotten haſtily at the beginning* (and if Haſtily, ſeldom Honeſtly) *but the end thereof ſhall not be bleſt.* Prov. xvi. 21.

I find time will not allow my Anſwering of Objections againſt this Doctrine, or the Drawing of Inferences from it, and therefore rather than encroach upon your Patience, I ſhall here conclude. Now God bleſs what ye have heard, and preſerve you from all Byaſs of Injuſtice, and keep your Hearts and Minds in and even and righteous Temper, not only in Matters of Judgment, but in all the Actions of your Life. A Temper which we have all reaſon to believe will be attended with all ſorts of Spiritual and Temporal Bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus. *To him with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt let us render, as is due, all Praiſe Honour and Glory, Might Power and Dominion, for ever and ever.* Amen.

SERMON IX.

MAT. V. 7.

Blessed are the Merciful: *for they shall obtain Mercy.*

The First Sermon on this Text.

IN these Words our blessed Lord goes on to undeceive his Hearers, as to their carnal Opinions and Expectations of the *Messiah*'s Kingdom; and to take off the wrong Preparations and Dispositions of their Minds for it: As if he had said, "Your Hearts being full of Expectation of great "Worldly Conquests, ye think of nothing but to "knock all down before you, to kill and slay and "plunder, and by the *Messiah*'s Help to call for Fire "from Heaven, and to bring a vast deal of Misery "and Desolation on Mankind. But ye are are ex-

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" ceedingly miſtaken in the *Meſſiah*, and in the Nature " of his Kingdom. He comes in Love, not in Hatred " to Men; he is ſo far from wronging any Man, that " he comes on purpoſe to do them all the good they " are capable of. And if ye intend to join your ſelves " to him as his Diſciples and Followers, or to have " any Share in his Kingdom, ye muſt be of another " Spirit and Temper, and inſtead of Hard-hearted " Cruel Deſigns againſt Mankind, muſt be moſt ten- " derly and compaſſionately Affected towards Them, " and ready to Help and Relieve them in all their " Diſtreſſes, Wants, and Neceſſities; and in ſo doing, " ye ſhall find Mercy both at the Hands of God " and Man."

From the Words thus explained there are theſe Two Things will come properly under our Conſideration.

1. The Virtue of *Mercifulneſs*, here recommended. *Bleſſed are the Merciful.*

2. The Promiſe annexed. *For They ſhall obtain Mercy.*

As to the *Firſt*, the Virtue of *Mercifulneſs*, it is a Duty of very large Dimenſions, as taking in all the Compaſſion and Kindneſs we can ſhew to our Neighbour in Diſtreſs; And thoſe Diſtreſſes being infinitely Various and Numerous, make this Duty to be of a vaſt Compaſs and Extent. It differs from

the foregoing Virtue of *Juſtice*, in that it is converſant about ſuch Duties as our Neighbour has no ſtrict Right to; ſuch as he may indeed Pray and Deſire, but can't Exact or Require by any Laws of God or Man, as Peculiarly his Due. I ſay as Peculiarly his Due; for they are no otherwiſe due to Him, than to all other Men in Miſery and Diſtreſs. It is True we are anſwerable to God, for this Duty of *Mercifulneſs*; but for the Duties of ſtrict Juſtice, we are not only anſwerable to God, but likewiſe to Man.

In deſcribing this Duty of *Mercifulneſs*, I ſhall *Firſt* conſider *the Objects* of it; Then *the Acts*, and *Laſtly the Manner in which they are to be performed.*

I. As to the Objects of Mercy; in general they are *our Neighbours, conſidered in their Miſerable Circumſtances.* In which Reſpect we may conſider Them chiefly in theſe *Six* or *Seven* Capacities.

1. Our Neighbour *Erring.*

2. Our Neighbour *Offending.*

3. Our Neighbour *Perſecuted.*

4. Our Neighbour *in Want.*

5. Our Neighbour *in Pain, or Sickneſs.*

6. Our

6. Our Neighbour *under Crazedneſs, Madneſs, or Melancholy.*

7. Our Neighbour *unfortunate by the Loſs of Good Friends, or Untowardlineſs of Bad Relations.*

In all which Reſpects he is *An Object of Mercy:* And not only an Object of Mercy, when actually involved in any of theſe unhappy Circumſtances, that by that means we may help to extricate him out of them; but likewiſe when he is in Danger of Falling into them, that ſo his Danger and Miſery may be prevented.

(1) Our Neighbour *Erring* is a great Object of our *Mercy* and *Compaſſion*; eſpecially if the Errors are ſuch as are apt to be attended with Dangerous Conſequences, either as to his *Soul*, or *Body* or *Reputation*, or *Eſtate*. And therefore if we can either by Timely Precaution, and Providence guard our Neighbour againſt ſuch Company, and Books, as would infect him with Vicious Principles, tending to the Corruption of his Mind and Manners; or againſt ſuch Courſes as may prove deſtructive of his Health or Eſtate, or pernicious to his Reputation; all theſe are great Exerciſes of Mercy and Compaſſion toward him. Or if after he is unhappily involved, we can contribute towards the Extricating him out of them, the Mercy is ſtill ſo much the Greater, as he was in the greater Danger of being

being enſnared and Damnified thereby. *Jam.* V. 19, & 20. *Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth, and One convert him; Let him know that He which converteth the Sinner from the Errour of his Way, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a Multitude of Sins.*

(2.) Our Neighbour *Offending* is a great Object of our *Mercy* and *Compaſſion.* It is true in ſome Senſe, he is rather the Object of our *Reſentment* and *Indignation*, as bringing a Scandal on his Profeſſion, and Diſgrace to his Kindred, Teachers, and Aſſociates in Life or Religion; yet if we view him in another aſpect, I mean as he is enſlaved to vicious Habits; and as thoſe Habits commonly grow up into a *Second* Nature, and are extreme difficult to ſhake off; and conſequently as the offending Perſon is in the greateſt Danger of final Perdition, if in ſo dangerous Circumſtances he ſhould be abandoned of his Spiritual Phyſicians; we ſhall ſoon be convinced that a Man Starving for want of Bread, or languiſhing under a mortal Diſtemper, is not a greater Object of Compaſſion. For though theſe Calamities are more viſible to the Senſes, and conſequently more apt to move to Commiſeration, yet the Danger of Temporal Death, which is the Effect of the one, is not near ſo formidable, as that of Eternal Miſery, which is the Conſequence of the other.

This I ſpeak with relation to Offences againſt God; but there is another Senſe in which our Offend-

Offending Neighbour is an Object of Mercy; and that is as he has injured our Selves, and is the proper Object of our Pardon.

(3.) Another great Object of *Mercy* is our Neighbour *under Perſecution*. The Spirit of Perſecution is of all things the moſt oppoſite to this Merciful Temper here recommended, and the moſt Oppoſite indeed to the Spirit of Chriſtianity in general. And if our Saviour told his Diſciples, (*a*) when they were for praying for Fire from Heaven to conſume the *Samaritans*, that *they knew not what manner of Spirit they were of*; how much more may we ſay ſo, of them who of their own accord kindle the Fires of Perſecution upon Earth, without waiting the Deciſion of Heaven? And therefore our Neighbour *under Perſecution* is a great Object of Mercy, that we may contrive to extricate him out of it, or if he is but in danger of it, that we may contrive to obviate and prevent it.

(4.) Our Neighbour *in Want* is a great Object of *Mercy*; eſpecially if he wants not only *the Comforts* and deſirable Conveniences, but even the *Neceſſaries* of Life. And the more there is of *his Misfortune*, and the leſs of *his Fault* in theſe things, he is ſtill the greater Object of Mercy and Compaſſion. Many ſuch Objects the World abounds in;

(*a*) Luke 9. 55.

God ſo contriving it, to exerciſe the Patience of ſome, and the Charity of others.

(5.) Our Neighbour *in Pain or Sickneſs* is a great Object of *Mercy*: And calls for our Compaſſion in Viſiting him, and Comforting him under, or helping him out of his Affliction.

(6.) Our Neighbour alſo *Crazed in his Underſtanding, Mad, or Melancholy*, or that has his Thoughts all carried towards one Whim or Fancy, being utterly Ignorant or Inſenſible of other things, is a great *Object* of *Mercy and Compaſſion*. It is really a lamentable Sight to ſee the miſerable Effects of a diſordered Brain, or Vapours, or Melancholy; what Diſcontent, Fooliſhneſs, or Uneaſineſs, they cauſe to the Perſon himſelf, and what Trouble and Danger to all about him.

(7.) There are ſeveral other Calamities incident to Human Nature, not reducible under any of theſe Heads, ſuch as *Loſs of Friends*; *Alienation of Affection in Husband or Wife, Misfortunes of Children, or near Relations*; *Baniſhment, Captivity, Servitude, The being unhappily Yoked with Perſons of Atheiſtical Principles, Looſe Lives, Imperious, Jealous, Paſſionate or Diſcontented Tempers*; and many other Miſeries of Life; for it would be endleſs, and impoſſible indeed, to enumerate all.

But theſe are enough; for from a Mixture and Compoſition of thoſe bitter Ingredients, there is an in-

infinite Number of particular Caſes do ariſe, which render Men Objects of *Mercy* and Compaſſion.

II. But next to the *Objects*, let us now conſider the *Acts* of *Mercy*; that ſo we may the better underſtand wherein this Virtue of *Mercifulneſs* doth conſiſt. Of theſe ſomething may be proper to be conſidered in General; and ſomething relating to the particular Objects of *Mercy*, about which they are converſant. As to the Acts of *Mercy* in General, they are chiefly theſe.

(1.) A Conſideration of the Miſerable Circumſtances of others. For there is a ſort of Men in the World, who mind no Body but themſelves, nor are in the leaſt affected with the Miſerable Circumſtances of their Neighbour. Perhaps indeed they cannot help being moved a little with the Sight of a very Miſerable Object, if they ſhould accidentally come upon it; this is either an Infirmity, or a little remainder of Good Nature; but they take Care to keep their Minds, as much as ever they can, from the Conſideration of ſuch Miſerable Objects; for as the Prophet *Amos* deſcribes them, *Chap.* vi. 3. *They put far away the evil Day; They lie upon Beds of Ivory, and ſtretch themſelves upon their Couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midſt of the Stall; they chant to the Sound of the Viol, and invent to themſelves Inſtruments of Muſick. They drink Wine in Bowls, and anoint themſelves with the chief Ointments: but they are not grieved for the Affliction of* Joſeph. An elegant

De-

Deſcription of ſuch as give up themſelves totally to their own Eaſe, Luxury, Pleaſure, and Indolency, and have no Thought or Conſideration of the Miſeries of others. It is certain this Temper is too natural a Fruit of Proſperity; and therefore we ſhall do well to watch and rectify it. When we ſit down to a Plentiful Table, let us force a Reflection on *their* ſad Circumſtances who ſuffer for Hunger; and when we are Warm Cloathed, let us conſider them who have ſcarce any Rags to cover their Nakedneſs; or if we find our Minds hard to be brought to ſuch Mortifying Conſiderations, let us now and then make a Viſit to our Pooreſt Neighbours, and help our Imagination and Conſideration, with the Sight and Senſe of their poor and unhappy Circumſtances.

(2.) Next to the Conſideration of our Neighbour's Miſery, it is the part of the *Merciful* Man to ſtir up his Bowels of Compaſſion. Theſe Inward Bowels are the moſt eſſential part of *Mercy*. This is in Oppoſition to a ſtrange, ſelfiſh, unconcerned Temper, which is hardened againſt our Neighbour's Calamity, and immediately turns away the Eyes and Thoughts from the Conſideration of it; like the *Prieſt* and the *Levite* in the Parable, (*a*) *Who ſeeing the Poor Wounded Man, ſheared off from him, and paſſed by on the other Side of the Way*; or like them

(*a*) Luke 10. 31, 32.

whom

whom St. *James* deſcribes, whoſe Compaſſion evaporates all in good Words to a Brother or Siſter, that is Naked and Deſtitute of daily Food; (a) *Depart in Peace, be you warmed, and filled, but give them none of thoſe Things that are needful to the Body.* Certainly if the Inward Bowels are once throughly moved, we ſhall be excited to uſe our hearty Endeavours towards the Relief of the miſerable Object.

(3.) Thoſe Endeavours will break out in our Prayers to God for them; in our own exerciſing our Charity and Beneficence, according to our Ability; and in ſtirring up or procuring others to do what we are not ſufficient for alone of our ſelves.

So much for the Acts of *Mercy* in General. But if we come to Particulars, they are very various, according as the Objects of *Mercy* do variouſly preſent; and we have Ability and Opportunity of bringing Help and Relief. Thus

1. Where the Object of *Mercy* is our Neighbour *in Error*, there are many Ways of exerciſing this Grace of *Mercy* towards him. For perhaps We our ſelves are capable of dealing with him, and convincing him; or if we are not capable of it our ſelves, we know and can help him to ſome Other that is; or to ſome Books, in which the Truth as to thoſe Points in which he errs, is diſcreetly handled; we can watch the

(a) James 2. 16.

moſt

moſt convenient Times of Addreſſing him; and exerciſe abundance of Patience and Condeſcenſion with him. For Errors in the Underſtanding, eſpecially in Matters of Religion, are as difficult to be handled, and muſt be as gently touched, as the tendereſt Sores in the moſt ſenſible Parts of the Body.

2. And there is no leſs Difficulty in managing our Neighbour *Offending*; for there we have to do with Inveterate Evil Habits, and the Head-ſtrong Inclinations of Men to Vice, which byaſs their Judgment, and utterly indiſpoſe them for admitting or following good Counſel. What can the moſt *Merciful* Diſpoſition do in this Caſe, but be earneſt in Prayer at the Throne of Grace, and improve all Advantages of good Counſel, good Books, good Providences, evil Conſequences of Vice, and good ones of Virtue; to convince, perſuade, ſurpriſe, or by all Means recover the Tranſgreſſor from the Evil of his ways?

But if the Offence is not only againſt God, but againſt our ſelves, there is ſomething more to be done; for then the proper Act of *Mercy* is to curb all Thoughts of Revenge, and to diſpoſe our ſelves to forgive him, as we expect Forgiveneſs of Almighty God.

3. As to the *Third* Object of *Mercy*, our Neighbour *Perſecuted*; the proper Acts of *Mercy* relating to it are, to contribute what we can, by propagating Principles of Moderation, to prevent or remove all Perſecuting Methods, and to ſet forward the reſtoring

ſtoring of Men in the Spirit of Meekneſs; and particularly within our own Sphere to exerciſe a gentle and equitable Command over our own Children, Servants, and Slaves; with Bowels of Compaſſion towards their Frailties and Infirmities; and remote from all Suſpicion of Fierceneſs or Cruelty: and in our ſeveral Stations to help to reſcue the Oppreſſed out of the Hands of his Perſecutors.

4. As to the *Fourth* Object of *Mercy*, our Neighbour *in Want*, there are many Acts relating to it: For as the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſaith, (*a*) *The Liberal deviſeth liberal Things.*

It is a great Act of *Mercy* in the way of Publick Charity to provide Receptacles and Enterment for poor Widows and Orphans, for Aged and Infirm Perſons, for Sick and Wounded, and Mad, and all the other Wants and Neceſſities of Life: Or in the way of private Charity if we do any Act of Bounty or Hoſpitality towards the Poor, or Strangers, or others in Diſtreſs, if it be ever ſo ſmall, upon a good Account; or if with an expreſs Intention to furniſh out thoſe Charities, (*b*) we are either more Diligent in our Purchaſes, or more Frugal in our Expences, or more Self-denied in our Appetites; or if what we can't ſpare in Coſt through the ſtraitneſs of our Circumſtances, we make up in good Will, Service, and Attendance, (*c*) performed for God's Sake

(*a*) Iſ. 32. 8. (*b*) Eph. 4. 28. (*c*) 2 Cor. 8. 12.

to Objects of Charity and *Mercy*; or if at leaſt we can help and recommend them to the Charity of Others, which may be more Beneficial and Serviceable to them than our Own; if our Intereſt, Credit, and good Word can relieve them, where our Purſe can't reach to do it; theſe, and many other are proper Acts of *Mercy* to thoſe that are in Want.

5. Our comfortable Letters and Viſits to our Neighbours in Pain or Sickneſs, our Sympathyzing with them, our Relieving them by our Advice or Means, or Tendance or Aſſiſtance; our Helping them out in their Affairs and Buſineſs, which ſuffers through their Indiſpoſition, are all proper Expreſſions of *Mercy* to that ſort of Objects.

6. *Laſtly*, The Exerciſe of Patience, Humility, Sympathy, Love, Prudence and Diſcretion to all People, who are either Crazed in their Underſtanding, or mourning under Affliction, or any way Diſcontented, and uneaſy in their Circumſtances; the ſuggeſting any thing that may make them eaſier in their Minds, or doing any thing to make them more Comfortable in their Circumſtances, or at leaſt to divert and put off their Melancholy, and to exhilarate them with innocent Mirth and Cheerfulneſs; are all proper Acts of *Mercy* to our Neighbour in ſuch Diſtreſs.

In ſhort as the *Apoſtle* adviſes, *Gal.* vi. 2. *Bear ye one another's Burdens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt.* As there are many Burdens too heavy and intolerable indeed to *One*, which yet by a Communi-

nication of Help are eaſy, ſo it is the Will of our Maſter *Chriſt*, that by our Sympathy with, and Aſſiſtance of one another in our Diſtreſſes and Afflictions, we Chriſtians ſhould be mutual Comforts and Supports to one another in all our uneaſy and adverſe Circumſtances.

III. Having ſpoke of *the Objects*, and *the Acts* of *Mercy*, it remains that I ſay ſomething in the laſt Place of *the manner in which thoſe Acts are to be performed.* And this I ſhall do only in the general, Time not permitting our Conſideration of the Particulars relating to it.

1. *Firſt* then, all Acts of *Mercy* ſhould be done with a *Readineſs* and *Forwardneſs of Mind.* The Life of them, is the good Grace and Cheerfulneſs with which they are performed. What comes with an ill Will, and as it were extorted by Importunity, as it loſes its Gracefulneſs with Men, ſo it is no way acceptable to God; (*a*) *For God loveth a cheerful Giver.* This Readineſs and Forwardneſs of Mind to Acts of Charity and Beneficence St. *Paul* commends highly in the *Corinthians*; that they needed no asking, but were ready of their own accord, and Forward, and Exemplary to others, 2 *Cor.* ix. 1. *As touching the miniſtring to the Saints*, ſaith he, *It is ſuperfluous for me to write to you; for I know the Forwardneſs of your Mind, for which I boaſt of you*

(*a*) 2 Cor. 9. 7.

to

to them of Macedonia, *that* Achaia *was ready a Year ago; and your Zeal hath provoked very many.*

2. Acts of *Mercy* ſhould be done with *Modeſty and Humility*; both to prevent Pride in the Giver, and Shame and Reproach in the Receiver. As to this there follows an excellent Advice in this ſame Sermon, *Ch.* vi. 1. about *not doing our Alms before Men to be ſeen of them*, &c.

3. Let our Works of *Mercy* proceed purely from a *kind* and *merciful*, not from a ſelfiſh, and mercenary *Temper*. Our Saviour deſigned that Chriſtian Beneficence ſhould in this be diſtinguiſhed from the Beneficence of the World. *Theirs* is with an Eye to their own Temporal Intereſt, and with an Expectation to receive the ſame, or equivalent Kindneſſes again; but the *good Chriſtian*'s Beneficence is with a pure Eye to God, without any Hopes of Reward from Man. (a) *If ye love them who love you*, ſays our Saviour, *What thank have ye? For Sinners alſo love thoſe that love them. And if ye do Good to them which do Good to you, what thank have ye? For Sinners alſo do even the ſame. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? But do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your Reward ſhall be great:* Not but that there may and ought to be a Communication of Civility, good Neighbourhood, and all Friendly

(a) Luke 6. 32.

Offices among Men; but this is not properly the Duty of *Mercy*, which we are now upon, which conſiders our Neighbour only as in Miſery, not as he may repay us, and be ſerviceable to us again.

4. Let our Works of *Mercy* be done readily without delay. *Say not to thy Neighbour* whoſe Wants are preſſing, *Go and come again, and to Morrow I will give thee, when thou haſt it by thee*, Prov. iii. 28.

5. Let our Works of *Mercy* as to the Meaſure of them be done Bountifully and Liberally, according to our Condition and Circumſtances. Sometimes indeed a ſmall Bounty is a great one, becauſe though ſmall in it ſelf it is great to them who give it, there being but little left. (*a*) *Like the Widow's two Mites*; but much greater Things are expected of the Rich; for they are charged to be (*b*) *Rich in good Works.*

6. Let us perform Acts of *Mercy* with Minds full of Gratitude to God, who gives us both the Ability and the Will to do them. *David* gives us a notable Example of this Grace, 1 *Chr.* xxix. 13. Where he accompanies his own and his People's Gifts to the Temple with this grateful Acknowledgment. *Now therefore our God we thank thee*, ſays he, *and praiſe thy glorious Name. But who am I, and what is my People, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly af-*

(*a*) Mar. 12. 42. (*b*) 1 Tim. 6. 18.

ter this Sort? For all Things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

7. *Laſtly* let us perform our Acts of *Mercy* to *Chriſt*'s Members, as to *Chriſt* himſelf. I mean let us have an Eye to him, and regard him in his Afflicted or Poor Members. For he has told us, that (a) *Whoſoever ſhall give a Cup of cold Water to any one in the Name of a Diſciple*, that is upon the account of his Relation to him, *he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his Reward.* This I take to be one of the beſt Ingredients in our Acts of *Mercy*; and it will be acknowledged in the great Day of Accounts, and rewarded accordingly, as our Saviour himſelf acquaints us, *Mat.* xxv. 40. Where the Acts of *Mercy* and *Charity* ſhewed to his diſtreſſed Brethren are interpreted, as ſhewed to himſelf. *Verily I ſay unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren ye have done it unto me.*

I have now given you a Deſcription of the *Merciful*; and ſhould next have proceeded to the Conſideration of the Promiſe annexed; *For they ſhall obtain Mercy*; but Time preventing me, I ſhall refer this latter Part of the Text to another Opportunity. God of his infinite Mercy bleſs what we have heard, that it may take Root in our Hearts,

(a) Mat. 10. 42.

and

and bring forth abundant Fruit in our Lives and Converſations, to his Glory and our eternal Comfort, through the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *To whom*, &c.

SERMON X.

MAT. V. 7.

Bleſſed are the Merciful: **for they ſhall obtain Mercy.**

The Second Sermon on this Text.

HAVING in a former Diſcourſe given you a Deſcription of the Virtue of *Mercifulneſs* here recommended; from theſe Words, *Bleſſed are the Merciful*; I proceed now to the Promiſe annexed: *For they ſhall obtain Mercy.* For Underſtanding of which Promiſe in its due Latitude, I muſt deſire you to obſerve that it extends to all Sorts of *Mercies*; both thoſe of this Life, and of that which is to come; as I ſhall prove by and by from other plain Paſſages of the Holy Scriptures.

I be-

I begin with the *Mercies* and *Bleſſings* of this Life, and theſe I ſhall diſtinguiſh into External and Internal, and ſhew you that they are both promiſed to, and conferred upon the *Merciful* Man.

I. *Firſt*, as for External *Mercies* of all Sorts, the Holy Scripture promiſes them very fully to the *Merciful*, as by an Induction of Particulars will appear.

1. A Deliverance out of Trouble is promiſed, *Iſ.* Lviii. 10. *If thou draw out thy Soul to the Hungry, and ſatisfy the Afflicted Soul; then ſhall thy Light riſe in Obſcurity*; that is, thy Adverſity ſhall be turned into Proſperity; *and the Lord ſhall guide thee continually, and ſatisfy thy Soul in Drought, and make Fat thy Bones, and thou ſhall be like a watered Garden, and like a Spring of Water, whoſe Waters fail not.* And Pſ. cxii. 4. *Unto the Upright there ariſeth Light in the Darkneſs:* And to ſhew what he means there by the *Upright*, it follows immediately; *He is Gracious, and full of Compaſſion and Righteous*, and *Pſ.* xli. 1. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor; the Lord will deliver him in Time of Trouble.*

2. God's Bleſſing and Succeſs is promiſed to all his Labours and Undertakings, *Deut.* xv. 7, 10, *If there be among you a poor Man of one of thy Brethren, within any of thy Gates, in thy Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou ſhalt not harden thy Heart, nor ſhut thine Hand from thy poor Brother* —— & v. 10. *Thou ſhalt ſurely give him, and thine Heart ſhall not be grieved, when thou giveſt unto him: be-*

cauſe that for this thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy Works, and in all that thou putteſt thine Hand unto.

3. The Staying off of Troubles and lengthening of our Tranquility is another Fruit of *Mercy* and *Charity*; And therefore the Prophet *Daniel* thus adviſes King *Nebuchadnezzar* at that Time threatened with great Calamities, *Dan.* iv. 27. *Wherefore O King let my Counſel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy Sins by Righteouſneſs, and thine Iniquities by ſhewing Mercy to the Poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy Tranquility.*

4. Plenty is likewiſe promiſed to the *Merciful*. *He that gives to the Poor*, ſaith Solomon, *ſhall not lack.* Prov. xxviii. 27. *He that hath Pity upon the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.* Prov. xix. 17. *The liberal Soul ſhall be made Fat, and he that watereth ſhall be watered alſo himſelf.* Prov. xi. 25. And Prov. iii. 9. *Honour the Lord with thy Subſtance, and with the firſt Fruits of all thine Increaſe: So ſhall thy Barns be filled with Plenty, and thy Preſſes ſhall burſt out with new Wine.*

5. Honour is likewiſe promiſed him, *Pſ.* cxii. 9. *He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the Poor; his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever; his Horn ſhall be exalted with Honour.* And in the ſame *Pſalm* it is promiſed of the ſame Charitable and Righteous Man, that *He ſhall be had in everlaſting Remembrance.*

6. De-

6. Deliverance from Enemies is likewiſe promiſed him, *Pſ.* xli. 2. Speaking of him that conſidereth the Poor; *The Lord will preſerve him*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the Earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the Will of his Enemies.*

7. God's Comforts are promiſed him in his Sickneſs. *The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the Bed of Languiſhing: thou wilt make all his Bed in his Sickneſs:* Speaking of the ſame Charitable Man, *Pſ.* xli. 3.

8. There is a Bleſſing promiſed to his Poſterity; *Pſ.* xxxvii. 26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his Seed is bleſſed.*

9. But more particularly the Promiſe in my Text, in ſo far as it relates to theſe Temporal Bleſſings, points at the *Mercy*, which *Merciful* Men ſhall meet with both from God and Man, whenever they come to be in Diſtreſs, and want it. Such as Relief in Poverty, and Famine, and *Mercy* at the Hands of Enemies; God's Providence ſo ordering Matters, that *Merciful* Perſons and *Merciful* States and Communities, are mercifully treated in their Diſtreſſes and Calamities. And on the other hand, *Unmerciful* Perſons and Communities are in their Turn treated by way of Repriſal with the like Hardheartedneſs they ſhew to others.

II. So much for External *Mercies*. The Promiſe is no leſs true as to Internal ones. Such as 1. an Openneſs of Heart, which I take to be a great Bleſ-

ſing, as well as a great Virtue. For it gives a Man the Enjoyment of what he has of the World; See *Eccl.* v. 19. *Every Man to whom God hath given Riches and Wealth, and hath given him Power to eat thereof, and to take his Portion; and to rejoyce in his Labour, this is the Gift of God.* Whereas a Penurious Narrow Spirit, as it deprives others of the Comforts of our Charity, and obſtructs all good Offices towards them; ſo it deprives our ſelves of the Uſe and Benefit of thoſe good Things, which we have in our Poſſeſſion. 2. Another great Inward Bleſſing attending the *Merciful* Man is a Contentment and Satisfaction with his own State and Condition, for he who is Bountiful to others is certainly delivered from thoſe Anxious and Solicitous Cares, and from thoſe troubleſom angry and uneaſy Reſentments, which attend the Covetous, Diſcontented Wretch. 3. The *Mereiful* Man is likewiſe happy in being delivered from the cruel and uneaſy Reſentments of Revenge. A Paſſion which of all other preys moſt upon the Perſon, in whoſe Breaſt it recides. 4. The *Merciful* Man has the Pleaſure of all his Neighbour's Bleſſings as well as his own; that Love and Compaſſion, which reigns in his Heart towards his Neighbour, giving him a ſolid and real Satisfaction in the Eaſe of their Calamities, as if it were the Eaſe of his Own. 5. He has likewiſe the unſpeakable Comfort of a good Conſcience in all his Dealings towards his Neighbour; which is like the Bleſſing of Health within, occaſioning an

Inward

Inward Tranquillity of Mind, which is the moſt Comfortable of all Earthly Bleſſings. 6. God has expreſly annexed the promiſe of Pardon of Sin, to this *Merciful* Temper, Mat. vi. 14. *If ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your Heavenly Father will alſo forgive you.* And our Lord has Taught us to pray for the Pardon of our Sins, only upon condition of our Pardoning the Treſpaſſes committed againſt us. *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that Treſpaſs againſt us.* Theſe are all Firſt rate Bleſſings, ſuch as are incomparably beyond the External Ones. But there is one behind, which even exceeds them, and that is

III. The Promiſe and Gift of Eternal Life to the *Merciful.* This is the great Promiſe, to which it is but Reaſon, that all the reſt give Place; and in which they are all eminently Fulfilled. *Sell that ye have,* ſaith our Saviour, Luke xii. 33. *and give Alms: Provide your Selves Bags which Wax not Old, a Treaſure in the Heavens that faileth not, where no Thief approacheth, neither Moth corrupteth.* And again Chap. xvi. 9. *I ſay unto you, make to your ſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs; that when ye fail, they may receive you into Everlaſting Habitations.* And the great Promiſe Annexed to that Charge given to the Rich to be Charitable, 1. Tim. vi. 17. is this, *Laying up in Store for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the Time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life.* This is that plentiful Harveſt which ſhall reward the plentiful Sowing.

ing. This is the good Meaſure heaped up, preſſed down and running over, which ſhall be repay'd to the Charitable Giver. The ſame Reward too, is promiſed to him who is *Merciful* in Forgiving as well as in Giving. *Condemn not and ye ſhall not be Condemned; Forgive and ye ſhall be Forgiven.* Luke vi. 37.

From all which and many more Paſſages of *Scripture*, it is plain that many Promiſes of Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Bleſſings are made to the *Merciful.* But the great Doubt is concerning the Performance, eſpecially of the Temporal Promiſes. For one would think, to weigh the Thing in the Ballance of carnal Reaſon, that one great part of *Mercifulneſs*, I mean *Bounty to the Poor*, ſhould rather Impoveriſh than enrich Men, as withdrawing ſo much from the Heap of their Earthly Treaſure. Yet both *Scripture* and *Experience* teach us the quite contrary Doctrine, namely that Charity doth not Impoveriſh, but Sanctifies the reſt, and brings Gods Bleſſing upon all that we have. Like the Widows Oil, which ſtill Increaſed and Multiplyed, as long as it was poured out; or like Living Fountains, which the more they are drawn, the Water flows both more plentifully and more clear. Perhaps this may be a Myſtery in Morals: and why ſhould there not be Myſteries in them, as well as in Matters of Faith? Yet for removing your Doubts and Scruples in this Matter, I ſhall enquire a little into the Reaſonableneſs of this Doctrine;

ctrine; after I have given you a few Examples of the Truth of it, taken out of the *Holy Scriptures*. *Abraham* and the Patriarchs were Men of great Charity and Hoſpitality; and God abundantly Bleſſed them with Wealth and Plenty. *Job* the richeſt Man in all the *Eaſt* was a Man of noted Mercy and Charity. *I delivered the Poor*, ſays he, *that cryed, and the Fatherleſs, and him that had none to help him. The Bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon me, and I cauſed the Widows Heart to ſing for Joy. I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet I was to the Lame. I was a Father to the Poor.* Job xxix. 12. And again Chap. xxxi. 16. *If I have withheld the Poor from their Deſire, or have cauſed the Eyes of the Widow to fail, or have Eaten my Morſel alone, and the Fatherleſs have not Eaten thereof; If I have ſeen any Periſh for want of Cloathing, or any Poor without Covering; if his Loyns have not bleſſed me, and if he were not warmed with the Fleece of my Sheep: Then let mine Arms fall from my Shoulder Blade, and mine Arm be broken from the Bone.* But perhaps ye may be apt to Object that *Job's* Charity did not keep him out of Trouble; that this Rich Man loſt all, and became Poor to a Proverb; ſo that we ſay **As poor as Job** to this Day: I confeſs it; and I deny not but that all Temporal Rewards and Promiſes muſt give Place to more valuable Bleſſings. If God had a Mind in order to the trying of *Job's* Patience, and the improving and exerciſing all his other Virtues, to bring Affliction upon him

him, this being for his greater Good, can be no Diminution of the Promiſe. But behold the End; God reſtored him to more flouriſhing Circumſtances than before; and brought him out of all his Troubles, with Wealth and Honour. But to give you two or three more Inſtances. In the *7th Chapter* of the firſt Book of *Kings*, we have an Account of a Poor Widow of *Sarepta*, who though in great Poverty her ſelf, kept the Prophet *Elijah*, and entertained him at her Houſe, during the whole time of a very long Famine; And we find there how abundantly the Lord recompenced her by Miraculouſly preſerving and increaſing her Meal and Oil, wherewith here Family was Nouriſhed; Beſides the reſtoring her Son to Life, and other Bleſſings to her, and her Houſe, from the Prophets good Company. Again in the ſecond Book of *Kings*, we have the Hiſtory of the Charitable *Shunamite*, who lodged and entertained the Prophet *Eliſha*, with abnndance of Notable Rewards of her Charity, in the Gift of a Son after her long Barrenneſs; in the reſtoring her Son to Life, after he was Dead; in forewarning her of, and ſo guarding her againſt an approaching Famine; and in recovering her Houſe and Lands, which had been loſt during her Abſence. I ſhall add but one Inſtance in the *New Teſtament*. Ye know the Hiſtory of *Cornelius*, *Acts* x. How Miraculouſly he was brought over to the Chriſtian Faith; It was the Conſequence of his Prayers and Alms. For the firſt Deſcription we have of him

is, that *He was a Devout Man, one that feared God with all his Houſe, who gave much Alms to the People, and prayed to God alway.* And then verſe 4. The Angel tells him that *His Prayers and his Alms were come up for a Memorial before God*; upon which he is immediately directed to ſend for *Peter*, who was to Inſtruct him in the Chriſtian Faith. Several other Inſtances might be given of *Mercy* ſhewed to the *Merciful.* But theſe are enough to confirm the Doctrine of my Text, as far as Examples will do it.

As for other Reaſons of the Promiſe in my Text, I ſhall but offer at a very few, that we may have time to apply this Doctrine to our own State and Circumſtances.

1. It is moſt agreeable both to the *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice*, and *Goodneſs* of God; that *Mercy* ſhould be the Portion of the *Merciful* Man. (1.) It is agreeable to his *Wiſdom*, by this means to allure the Beneficence of his Creatures to one another. For if Gods Bleſſing commonly attended the moſt Covetous Endeavours of Men, we ſhould not be ſo apt to mind the Works of *Mercy*; certainly the greateſt Encouragement to them is, Gods Promiſe that he will accept of them as lent to himſelf, and will be the Pay-maſter. What ſtrange Confuſion would be brought into the World ſhould God abandon it, and let Covetous, Unjuſt, Oppreſſing and Defrauding Men go on in their wicked Courſes, and reap all the Advantage of their wicked

and

and Hardhearted Devices? It is then a neceſſary part of Gods good Conduct and Management of the World, that a Bleſſing attends Charitable Perſons, and Charitable Societies; and on the other Hand that the Hardhearted Uncharitable Wretches ſhould either be diſappointed in their Contrivances for getting and hoarding; or ſhould not have the Comfort of enjoying what they gather; but ſhould lay it up for him that will have *Mercy* on the Poor. (2.) It is agreeable to Gods *Juſtice*, that Men ſhould meet with Rewards and Puniſhments ſuitable to their Good and Bad Actions. *With the Merciful* ſaith the Pſalmiſt Pſ. xviii. 25. *Thou wilt ſhew they ſelf Merciful, with an Upright Man thou wilt ſhew they ſelf Upright: With the Pure thou wilt ſhew they ſelf Pure, and with the Froward thou wilt ſhew they ſelf Froward*, that is, as theſe Words are well Paraphraſed by an Eminent Divine. (*a*) "Such "is the gracious Method of thy Providence O Lord, "who wilt do Good to thoſe who do Good to others, "and do them Juſtice alſo (againſt their Oppreſſors "and Calumniators) who preſerve their Integrity: "And keep thy Promiſes faithfully with thoſe "whoſe Piety is unfeigned, and who immoveably "keep their Fidelity to thee. But if any will "take crooked Ways to attain their Ends; thou "wilt enſnare them in their own Devices; and by

(*a*) *Biſhop* Patrick.

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" ſuch Means as they leaſt think of, lead them to " Deſtruction." It is plain the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* looked upon it as a Piece of Divine Juſtice, to recompence Works of Charity done to the Saints. Heb. vi. 10. *For God is not unrighteous*, ſays he, *to forget your Work and Labour of Love, which ye have ſhewed toward his Name, in that ye have Miniſtred to the Saints, and do Miniſter.* (3) It is agreeable to Gods *Goodneſs* to ſhew *Mercy* to the *Merciful.* In ſtrict Juſtice indeed our *Merciful* Deeds, being mixed with great Imperfections, and Ballanced with abundance of Sins, could produce but very ſmall Hopes of Retribution; but when we conſider that Gods Juſtice will be diſpenſed with *Mercy*, we have all Reaſon to hope that ſooner or later the *Merciful* ſhall be *Mercifully* rewarded. *Unto thee O Lord belongeth Mercy*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, Pſ. lxii. 12. *for thou rendereſt to every Man according to his Work.*

2. If we conſider the Nature of Man, we ſhall find ſomething in it, to confirm this Doctrine, that *Merciful* Men ſhall *Obtain Mercy.* For (1.) *Mercifulneſs* is a very obliging and endearing Virtue, and naturally diſpoſes all Mankind to ſuch a Love and Kindneſs to the *Merciful* Perſon, that he muſt needs find the good Effects of it, if ever he has Occaſion for *Mercy* himſelf; *For a good Man* the Apoſtle ſaith *ſome would even dare to Die*, Rom v. 7. (2.) It is but Reaſonable to ſuppoſe that many Objects of Charity and *Mercy* having been relieved

lieved by the *Merciful* Man, they will at leaſt put up many Thankſgivings and Prayers to God for him: And that God who is the Hearer of Prayer, will certainly hear and anſwer the Prayers which are put up to him on ſo good an Account. (3.) It is to be hoped that thoſe Perſons, who have been relieved by the *Merciful* Man, will not all of them prove ſo ungrateful, but that ſeveral of them will uſe their utmoſt Endeavours to ſhew the ſame *Mercy* and Kindneſs to him in his Diſtreſs, which he ſhewed to them in theirs. So that upon all Accounts *Bleſſed are the Merciful; for they ſhall Obtain Mercy.*

Having thus gone through the Text, I ſhall briefly, by way of Application, draw an Inference or two from it, and conclude.

1. Is *Mercifulneſs* a Qualification neceſſary for all *Chriſt*'s Diſciples, to diſpoſe them for his Heavenly Kingdom? Then this diſcovers to us what Unchriſtian Methods, thoſe of Cruelty and Perſecution are, either for propagating the Goſpel, or for preſerving the Truth and Purity of it. The Church of *Rome* has been moſt notoriouſly guilty in this Reſpect. For ſuppoſing theſe were the Truths of *Chriſt*, which ſhe maintains (as God knows theſe Truths are buried by her in a great Heap of other Rubbiſh) who gave her Power to propagate, or preſerve them by ſuch Cruel and Barbarous Methods, as they have done in ſo many Maſſacres, Inquiſitions and Perſecutions which they have ſet

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a Foot? What a Butchery was their firſt Propagating of the Goſpel in the *Spaniſh* Dominions in *America*; enough to make Chriſtianity ſtink in the Noſtrils of the Heathen? And how deep that cruel Church has Drunk of the Blood of Martyrs, their Perſecutions and Inquiſitions ſet on, wherever they have Power enough, do ſufficiently Teſtifie to the World. Let us by no means imitate, but carefully avoid that Bloody Spirit. Theſe are Methods which God will never bleſs; and which have a greater Tendency to ſcare the Heathen away from Chriſtianity, than to invite them to it. And therefore if we intend to make any Proſelytes among the *Indians*, our Neighbours, or the *Negroes*, our Servants, let us treat both the one and the other, with the Goſpel Methods of Righteouſneſs and *Mercy*; and not with the Antichriſtian Ways of Injuſtice and Cruelty, remembring my Text; that *Bleſſed are the Merciful; for they ſhall obtain Mercy.*

2. Are there ſo great Promiſes of Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Bleſſings made to the *Merciful?* Then by the Rule of Contraries there are great Curſes of all ſorts laid up in Store for the Hard-hearted and Unmerciful. St. James tells us, that (a) *He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath ſhewed no Mercy.* And therefore let us not content our Selves with *Sobriety* and *Temperance*, with *Juſtice*

(a) Jam. 2. 13.

ſtice and *Honeſty*, nay not with Devotions and Sacraments, except we abound in this Grace alſo, of Bounty and Mercy to the Poor: Which ye ſee is attended with many noble Promiſes both of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. Of which God give us all Grace by being truly *Merciful*, in due time to become Partakers through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, *To whom*, &c.

SER-

SERMON XI.

MAT. V. 8.

Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart: for they ſhall ſee God.

IN theſe Words our Saviour endeavours to take off another evil Diſpoſition of the Multitude and the Diſciples, with relation to the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; which was, their being ſo much addicted to Carnal Pleaſures; for among other Things which are uſually propoſed by Conquerours, Wealth, Honour, Luxury, Triumph over Enemies, Arbitrary Government, and Revenge; This part of the Mahometan Paradiſe, uſes likewiſe to take up a chief Place in their Thoughts, namely a full Gratification of their Luſts. And therefore among many other Virtues, requiſite to

prepare and diſpoſe them for *Chriſt*'s Kingdom, it was neceſſary to add this of *Purity*, and to let them know that without it, there was no ſuch thing as the being a Genuine Member of the Chriſtian Church here, or any Hopes of Attainment of the Beatifick Viſion hereafter. *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart: for they ſhall ſee God.*

In which Words we are to conſider

1. The Virtue here recommended, *Purity of Heart.*

2. The Encouragement annexed, *The ſeeing of God.*

3. How *Purity of Heart* diſpoſes us for the Knowledge and Viſion of God.

I. We are *Firſt* to conſider the Virtue here recommended, *Purity of Heart. Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart:* In which Words are deſcribed, ſays St. *Chryſoſtome*, either the Perſons who are poſſeſſed of all Virtue, and areConſcious to themſelves of no ill Thing; or elſe thoſe who ſtudy Chaſtity and Continence. The Expreſſion is uſed, and is true in both theſe Senſes: That great Father is for this laſt Senſe, taking *Purity* for Chaſtity; and indeed what induces me to think it is intended here in that Senſe, for a Purity from the Sins of Uncleanneſs, is becauſe I take all the other *Beatitudes* to be Particular

cular Virtues, and ſuch Virtues as did moſt directly correct their Carnal Notions of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom, and the wrong Diſpoſitions of Mind occaſioned thereby: Of which this was One, as I juſt now ſhewed you, and therefore I am unwilling to Interpret it in ſuch a General Senſe, as would comprehend all the other *Beatitudes*, and make our Saviour uſe ſo many Tautologies, as he muſt uſe, if he meant Righteouſneſs for the whole Duty of Man, and *Purity of Heart*, for the general keeping of a good Conſcience. Congruouſly then to what I take to be the general Scope and Deſign of this Diſcourſe, particularly of theſe *Eight Beatitudes*, which do each of them take off one of the bad Diſpoſitions for the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, I Interpret *The Pure in Heart* to be thoſe who not only endeavour after an Abſtinence from the Outward Groſs Sins of Uncleanneſs, but ſtudy likewiſe a Diſentanglement from them, in Heart and Thought, ſetting their Love and Affection on God, as their Chief Good and Happineſs. Theſe are the Two Branches of this Virtue.

1. A Mortifying of all Luſtful Inclinations.

2. The Exerciſe of the Love of God.

1. A Mortifying of all Luſtful Inclinations, the Indulgence of which doth exceedingly Pollute the Heart of Man. In this the Chriſtian Religion Di-

ſtinguiſhes it ſelf above all other Religions that ever were in the World. Many of the Heathens encouraged Fornication, and ſome of them the Promiſcuous Uſe of Women. The Mahometan and Jewiſh Religions, though they condemn all Whoredom, yet by allowing Polygamy and Divorces for very ſlight Cauſes, they have found Ways under other Names, to give a moſt Extraordinary Indulgence to Mens Luſtful Inclinations. But the Chriſtian Religion has allowed no more Indulgence of that Kind, than is neceſſary for the Propagation of the World, and the Virtuous Education of Children, and a reaſonable Partition of the Cares of Life in holy Matrimony. And even in that State it ſelf there are great Reſtraints of Purity and Continence required.

But beſides the external Part of *Purity* and Chaſtity, there is a much higher Degree of this Virtue required in my Text: For *Purity of Heart* is a much further Degree of Continence than a bare Abſtinence from Fornication and Adultery, and other more unnatural Impurities; it reaches the Heart and Thoughts, and kills Luſt or unlawful Love in the Bud; it ſtops up that Fountain of all Uncleanneſs, and ſuffers it not to break out, not ſo much as into Impure Imaginations, far leſs luſtful Deſigns, Propoſitions, or Intrigues.

If any one ſhould be deſirous to know why a thing ſo natural to Men as luſtful Thoughts, ſhould be ſo ſtrictly prohibited, as we find they are in diverſe

Places

Places of the *New Teſtament*, even under pain of Damnation; I anſwer, for the ſame Reaſon that rank poyſonous Weeds, which are apt to infect the Soyl, are to be rooted up as ſoon as perceived in a Garden; for if they are neglected, they ſoon Kill all the good Plants that are near them, and ſpread over all the Ground, that it becomes good for nothing. So theſe unclean Thoughts are ſuch a poyſonous Weed, that wherever they are indulged, they Eat out all other virtuous Inclinations, and make a Man uſeleſs as to all other good Deſigns and Buſineſs.

I foreſee there will be another Occaſion hereafter of handling this Virtue at large, when we come to our Saviour's Explication of the *Seventh Commandment*, which follows in the ſame *Chapter*, and therefore I ſhall be but ſhort upon it at preſent in conſidering a little wherein the Mortification of Inward Luſt doth conſiſt. And this I ſhall attempt to do in a few uſeful Rules, leaving the Succeſs to Gods Grace, without which all our own Endeavours will prove but mere Cob-webs upon the approach of Temptations.

(1.) *Firſt* then, it is certain that Luſt is much better dealt with at a Diſtance, than near at Hand; ſo all thoſe Means are the beſt in order to the Mortification of it, which keep it from ever Kindling in the Heart at all: Such as *e. g.* the diligent Exerciſe of the Love of God; the drawing near to him by inceſſant Prayer; the ſtoring of our Minds and Memories with ſuch Scripture Truths

and Phraſes as may ſerve for ſo many Antidotes againſt the Sins of Uncleanneſs; the keeping of the Body under by conſtant Sobriety and Temperance, and frequent Faſting; the keeping of the Mind always well employed in ſome good Buſineſs; Idleneſs and Laſineſs being the great Opportunities the Devil makes uſe of, to throw in his Temptations; the keeping out of the Way of all Tempting Objects; avoiding the Converſation of all Lewd and dangerous Company, and abſtaining carefully from Reading or hearing Read all laſcivious Books, Songs or Ballads, and carefully keeping all ſuch from your Children, and all others over whom ye have any Authority, or with whom ye have any Intereſt; and at laſt when nothing elſe will do, making uſe of that Remedy which God has appointed, lawful Marriage.

(2.) But though theſe Remedies are the beſt which keep Luſt from Kindling in the Heart, the other are not to be neglected, which aſſiſt us in its nearer Approaches, and our more cloſe and immediate Conflict with it; ſuch as, throwing out impure Thoughts with Indignation and Abhorrence, ſo ſoon as they preſent themſelves to our Minds: It is perhaps in the Power of the Devil, to throw in a ſudden impure Thought; but it is Our Fault if we harbour it, and the longer we harbour it, it is ſo much more Dangerous a Gueſt. And to enable us to throw out ſuch Thoughts, it will be a great Help to us, not to ſtand arguing and dallying with them,

them, but to betake our Selves, as faſt as we can, to ſome other good Buſineſs; for it is a true Obſervation of this Sort of Sins, that they are not ſo eaſily reſiſted by brisk Attacks, as by prudent Retreats; and therefore if we divert the Temptation by haſtening into other Company and Buſineſs, and not truſting our Selves alone with it, far leſs with the tempting Object, by the Grace of God we may get our Minds recovered into a better Temper.

(3.) Becauſe after our utmoſt Care, it is to be feared that ſometimes we ſhall be overcome with the Temptation, and at beſt ſomething of Impurity will ſtick to us, we muſt take Care to exerciſe a Daily Repentance with relation to thoſe Sins, and never to give up our ſelves to any evil Habit of them: For it is moſt certain that by every repeated Act Sin grows ſtronger, and we grow weaker, and more and more out of Heart; ſo that at laſt by frequent Foils we ſhall become ſo Cowardly, like an Army that is often beaten, that we ſhall ſcarce be able to ſtand before our Enemy at all.

So much for the Negative Part of this Duty of *Purity of Heart*, the Mortification of Luſt.

2. I come next to the more Poſitive Part of it, namely, the fixing of our Affection on the only worthy Object, or the Duty of the Love of God, in which true *Purity of Heart* conſiſts. All Creatures have ſomething that is their chief Good; in ſeeking after which they place their chief Delight. The Chief Good of Brute Creatures conſiſts in Senſible

ſible Things, ſuch as tend to the Fattening of the Body, and the Gratifying the Luſts thereof; but the Chief Good of Rational Creatures is to enjoy God; and whenever the Heart of Man goes a Whoring after inferiour Things it contracts ſo much Impurity. Only there is this Difference between Him and the other more Spiritual Superiour Beings, that He being made up of Soul and Body, and being obliged to provide for Both, can not addict himſelf entirely to the Care of his Soul, but is allowed in a ſubordinate Manner to mind the Body, and the Things of this Life. Only it is expected and required of him, that he ſhould mind his Soul and the Chief Good thereof in the Principal Place, and other Things moderately, and within ſuch Bounds as God has appointed. He is likewiſe taught that it is but for a ſhort Time, the Time of this Preſent Life, that he is to be under this Neceſſity of providing for the Body; and that there is an Eternal Immortal State to ſucceed to this ſhort Life, where he ſhall be admitted to the more immediate, uninterrupted Viſion and Fruition of God. Now the more the Soul is diſentangled from the Love of inferiour Things, and the more intent it is on the Love of God its Supreme Good, ſo much the Purer it is, ſo much the remoter from the Beaſtly, and ſo much the nearer to the Angelical Nature. Juſt ſo much then as we advance in the Love of God, ſo much do we advance in *Purity*. There is no Medium: either the Soul will be dilated in the Love of God

(a)

or hampered and polluted with the Love of the World. As the Love of inferiour Things defiles the Soul, the Love of God clears it of its Defilement, and makes it more and more Angelical. And therefore one of the beſt of Studies is how to (*a*) *Keep our ſelves in the Love of God*, whether by an intent Contemplation of his Glorious Attributes and Perfections, as we are able to underſtand them from his Works of Creation or Providence, and more particularly from the *Revelations* of himſelf in the *Holy Scriptures*; or by the Conſideration of the many Expreſſions of his Love to Us, eſpecially in ſending his Dear Son *Jeſus Chriſt* into the World for our Redemption and Salvation, and beſtowing upon us the Graces and Gifts of his Holy Spirit, and for his waiting with ſo much Goodneſs and Longſuffering Patience, for our Repentance and Amendment of Life; and for the innumerable other Mercies and Favours he is daily beſtowing on us; or whether by the Exerciſe of Love, in a continual drawing near to Him in Prayers, Interceſſions and Thankſgivings; or by a Prompt and cheerful Obedience to all his Precepts, and a patient Suffering, when we are called to it, for his Sake; eſpecially by ſlighting every Thing that comes in Competition with the Love of God, and admitting Nothing but in Subordination to it, and in ſuch Degrees and Meaſures as is very conſiſtent with it. All theſe, which are the

(*a*) Jude *Verſe* 21.

Exer-

Exercises of the Love of God, are the best Means for purifying the Heart from all inordinate Affection to inferiour Things; more particularly from all unlawful Lusts and Pleasures, which are the Impurities designed to be cautioned against in this *Beatitude*. So much for the Virtue here recommended, *Purity of Heart*.

II. The *Second* Thing we are to consider is the Encouragement annexed, *The Seeing of God*. By this Expression we are not to understand that God is to be seen with our Bodily Eyes. His Glory being infinitely Great is not a proportionable Object for our Weak Sight. The Apostle St. *Paul* tells us, 1 *Tim.* vi. 16. *That He dwells in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath seen, nor can see.* This *Seeing of God* then must be with the Eye of the Mind; and we are to understand it both of that Measure of the Knowledge of God, which is communicated to Good Men here, and of that more perfect Knowledge of God, which shall be communicated to them hereafter.

Of that Measure of Knowledge of God, which is attainable here, some is more imperfect by the Light of Nature; (a) *For the invisible Things of Him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.* Some other is more perfect, name-

(a) Rom. 1. 20.

ly,

ly, as it is revealed in God's Word, tho' in That the Law and the Prophets were very obſcure; and till *Chriſt* brought us the *Revelation* of God's Mercy and Good-will to Mankind, we were very much in the Dark, as to that Particular. *No Man hath ſeen God at any Time*, ſaith St. *John*, Ch. i. 18. *The only Begotten Son, which is in the Boſom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Yet after all the Manifeſtation *Chriſt* has thought fit to make of the Father, even That is very Dark in Compariſon of what it ſhall be in the Future State. St. *Paul* compares the one to *Seeing through a Glaſs darkly*, and the other to *Seeing Face to Face.* 1 Cor. xiii. 12. But what that Beatifick Viſion will be, we can but very imperfectly tell, tho' in general we know it will be infinitely Glorious and Happy. Yet from this Promiſe in the Text, we may apprehend ſomewhat of the Felicity of that Future State. For,

1. As it is a Knowledge of God, and Acquaintance with him, we may eaſily apprehend that it will be the greateſt Improvement of the Underſtanding. If the Queen of *Sheba* could obſerve how happy *Solomon*'s Servants were, who ſtood continually before him, and heard his Wiſdom; what a vaſt Degree of Happineſs muſt it be, to be acquainted with Unerring Wiſdom it ſelf; to have the Secrets of God's Providence explained; the Beauty of his Counſels and Works diſplayed; all the Endearments of his Love made known, and all the Advantages of his everlaſting Friendſhip clearly re-

repreſented to the enlightened Mind and Underſtanding?

2. This Knowledge of God will not only improve the Underſtanding, by preſenting it with the beſt Objects, but by enlarging the Powers and Capacities of it, to take in a vaſt Deal of that Knowledge, unſpeakably beyond what in this imperfect State it is capable of. For here as our Bodily Eyes are ſoon blinded, by looking upon the Sun in its Meridian Brightneſs, ſo our weak Underſtandings are ſoon amazed and confounded with the Contemplation of God's Nature and Attributes, and with the Conſideration of his Works of Creation and Providence, as being a Subject far above its Reach and Capacity. But then the Mind ſhall be ſo much improved in its intellectual Faculty, that there will be as great a Difference between what it underſtands now, and what it ſhall underſtand then, as there is between ſeeing a remote Object by the help of a Proſpective Glaſs, and the ſeeing it at Hand, what the *Apoſtle* calls *Face to Face*.

3. This Knowledge will not be a dry ſpeculative Knowledge, influencing only the Brain and the intellectual Faculty, as much of our Knowledge of Divine Things is here below; but it will ſuitably affect us with Love and Complacence; it will be a lively Senſe and Experience, rather than a Knowledge and Contemplation; and conſequently will break in upon the Heart and Affections with all the Tenderneſs of a Pure Love, and raviſhing Joy and Delight, which is altogether unconceivable, and indeed

deed inexplicable by any of thoſe inferiour Loves and Complacences we know here below: For beſides that the Objects of them are of infinitely leſs Dignity, and prove commonly but mere Vanities and Deluſions, never affording the Heart that Degree of Happineſs and Satisfaction which it promiſed it ſelf in the Enjoyment of them; there are ſo many Things to allay and abate, and at laſt totally to deſtroy that pretended Felicity, that it is Nothing, or leſs than nothing in Compariſon of the Love and Enjoyment of an Object of infinite and endleſs Worth, without any the leaſt Fear or Sorrow with it; and in whom, though ſuch Degrees of Happineſs and Perfection ſhall be immediately diſcovered, as are ſufficient to content and ſatisfy the greateſt Rational Deſire; yet there ſhall be continually a gradual Encreaſe of Knowledge and Love, by new Diſcoveries of Perfection, and freſh Participations of Joy to all Eternity. But after all we muſt confeſs that this Part of the Happineſs of ſeeing God in Heaven, doth infinitely exceed all we can conceive, or ſpeak of it.

III. The *Third* Thing I was to conſider from the Words, is what Influence this *Purity of Heart* has in diſpoſing us for the Knowledge and Viſion of God. And here I ſhall paſs by how it diſpoſes us by way of Condition; what ſeems to me moſt Peculiar in the Promiſes annexed to theſe *Beatitudes*, is, that they are ſomething reſulting from the Nature of the Chriſtian Virtues themſelves, to which the Bleſſings

Bleſſings are annexed. Poverty in Spirit, or a Diſengagement of the Heart from the World doth naturally diſpoſe the Mind, both for the Evangelical State here, and for the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter; Godly Sorrow doth naturally diſpoſe us for Spiritual Comforts; Meekneſs qualifies a Man for a quiet Enjoyment of his worldly Inheritance and Poſſeſſion; Honeſty ſecures a Man againſt Want and Poverty, and helps to provide him with a Competency of the good Things of this Life; Mercifulneſs naturally moves Mercy and Commiſeration in others; and Inward Purity here doth mightily prepare and diſpoſe the Soul for the Knowledge, Senſe and Love of God. For there can be no greater Weight and Byaſs upon the Soul to hinder it in its Contemplation and Love of God, than the Love of unlawful Pleaſures; and that for theſe among other Reaſons.

1. Becauſe they intoxicate and bewitch a Man that he can't know or be rightly ſenſible of his true Intereſt, or undertake any wiſe Conduct of himſelf. (a) *Whoredom and Wine take away the Heart.*

2. They blunt his Underſtanding that he can have no right Senſe of God and Religion; but like a Brute Beaſt he blindly follows the Brutiſh Appetite, tho' to his own Deſtruction. *He goeth after Her ſtraightway*, ſaith Solomon, *Prov.* vii. 22. *As an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Cor-*

(a) Hoſea 4. 11.

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rection of the Stocks; till a Dart ſtrike through his Liver, as a Bird haſteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life.

3. They ſtupify his Conſideration, that tho' he is endowed with better Principles, and knows better Things, he can't mind or conſider them. Thus it is recorded of *Solomon* himſelf, for all his Wiſdom and Experience, that (*a*) *When he was Old, his many Wives turned away his Heart after other Gods; and his Heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the Heart of* David *his Father.* And tho' they have not this Effect on all Men to turn them away to Idolatry, they certainly turn their Minds from ſeeking and minding God.

4. They weaken the Reſolution and Active Faculties, that they can't flee upwards towards God in Devotion, or put any good Purpoſe vigorouſly in Execution. In this Reſpect the Heart of a Whoriſh Woman is compared to *Snares and Nets*, and her Hands to *Bands*; and the Difficulty of Extricating Ones ſelf from thoſe evil Habits is compared to a Man's ſtruggling to get out of (*b*) *a deep Ditch* or *narrow Pit.* In ſhort, it is certain that nothing doth more ſteal away the Heart from God than the Love of ſinful Pleaſures. If we ſhake off theſe, we not only remove the greateſt Impediment to the Knowledge and Love of God, but prepare the Soul

(*a*) 1 Kin. 11. 4. (*b*) Prov. 23. 27.

for the Influences of God's Holy Spirit. As in a clear Looking Glaſs the Face is beſt ſeen, ſo in a *Pure Heart* we ſee the cleareſt Ideas, and have the brighteſt Reflexions of the Divine Nature and Perfections.

I ſhall conclude with a ſhort Exhortation to all to ſtudy this Character of a true Member of *Chriſt's* Kingdom, that is, of a true Chriſtian, *Purity of Heart*, a moſt Rare Virtue in this Corrupt Generation, in which Men are ſo far from it, that they have ſhaken off all Modeſty, which is the outward Garb and Appearance of it, and think it a Point of Genteel good Breeding to glory in their Exceſſes as to the contrary Vice. It is no Wonder we have ſo little true Knowledge of God, and ſo little Senſe and Experience of Divine Things, when we neglect ſo much the beſt Means of attaining it, the Purifying our Hearts from the Love of Vile Sinful Pleaſures. Could we once perſwade our ſelves in good Earneſt to ſet about this Study, we ſhould find all other good Things would follow as in a Chain; for from *Purity of Heart* would follow a Knowledge and Senſe of God, and from thence the Love of him, and from thence a cheerful Obedience to his Commandments, and from thence a confirmed Habit of Holineſs and Virtue, and from thence Peace and Joy, and Aſſurance of God's Love and Favour, both in this Life, and in that which is to come.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant for *Jeſus Chriſt's* Sake. *To whom*, &c.

SER-

SERMON XII.

MAT. V. 9.

Bleſſed are the Peace-makers: *for they ſhall be called the Children of God.*

The Firſt Sermon on this Text.

WE are now come to the two laſt *Beatitudes*, *Peaceableneſs* and *Patience*, which comprehend all ſuch Social Virtues, as are requiſite for our converſing and living quietly together in Society; The *Firſt*, which is that of our Text, recommends all ſuch Endeavours as with the Preſervation of our Virtue and Innocence, may prevent the infinite Broils and Troubles incident to us in Human Society; The Other puts us upon a Patient Suffering the

Evils that come upon us, which by all the Arts and Methods of Peace we can not prevent.

In Treating on this of *Peaceableneſs* or *Peacemaking*, I ſhall here firſt conſider the Deſcription of the Virtue itſelf, then the Meaning of being called the Sons of God; And *Laſtly*, How this Virtue entitles us to ſuch a Promiſe.

I. As to the Virtue of *Peacemaking*; in it our Lord meets with another of the Wrong Diſpoſitions of Mind his Hearers were prepoſſeſſed with, concerning the Kingdom of the *Meſſias*; for they fancied it would be a Fierce and Warlike Kingdom; that it would pick Quarrels with, and carry its Conqueſts over all the other Kingdoms of the World; Now in theſe Words our Saviour acquaints them that it was Men of quiet and peaceable Principles and Practices, and ſtudious to advance the ſame among Others, who were the fitteſt Subjects of that Heavenly Kingdom, and not Incendiaries and bloodly minded Men.

As for the Deſcription of the *Peacemakers*, that we may know what Duty is incumbent upon us from this *Beatitude*; I ſhall ſay ſomething of it firſt *Negatively*, then *Poſitively*.

Negatively then (1.) We are not from hence to apprehend that the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, or the Goſpel State, will be ſo Peaceable, that there will be no Differences of Judgment or Opinion under it; for while Men are in this World, ſubject to ſo much na-

natural Error and Corruption, while the Prejudices of their Education, the Infuſions of their Parents and Teachers, the Vulgar Errors of their Country and Neighbourhood are ſo many; while People's Talents of Underſtanding, Endeavours, and Diligence, are ſo Various; while there are ſo many Truths above our Reach in this imperfect State, which yet we will be graſping after; and while there is no Infallible Judge upon Earth to decide Controverſies, it is impoſſible but that there will be Differences in Opinion; and the many Precepts of our Religion concerning Peace and Quietneſs go upon the Suppoſition of ſuch Differences; and are only good Rules for the better managing of our ſelves under all theſe Circumſtances.

(2.) Theſe Differences being ſuppoſed; it is not the Deſign of the Chriſtian Precepts about *Peace-making*, to prohibit our uttering and venting our Doubts and different Opinions about Things to one another; or even to prohibit our arguing and diſputing about them, ſo it be done in a friendly and peaceable Manner, and with a Deſign to find out the Truth. This is one great Benefit of Chriſtian Society, that by a Communication of Counſels, and Notions, and Reaſons, we may be edified from one another, and have the Advantage of one another's Talents and Thoughts and Studies; an Advantage which would turn to much better Account; and which we ſhould be much more ſenſible of, if we did not bring our irregular Paſſions along with us,

which make us commonly both manage our Diſputes in a very unfair Manner, and in general contend for Pride and Victory, rather than for finding out the Truth.

Nor (3.) by this Precept of *Peacemaking* muſt we think our ſelves obliged, actually to put an End to all the Differences which are in the World; this being a Thing which paſſes our Power and Capacity; and therefore all that can be meant by the Precept is as St. *Paul* explains it, *That if it be poſſible, and as much as lyeth in us, we live peaceably with all Men.* Rom. xii. 18. Nor

(4.) Are we to extend this Poſſibility and Stretch of our Power, to all things ſimply Poſſible; but we are to limit that Poſſibility to our own Lawful and Regular Endeavours. We are not with another Bloody Church to think that Errors, Hereſies, and Schiſms are to be extirpated with Fire and Faggot, by all the Methods of Cruelty and Oppreſſion; but only by ſuch Rational Goſpel Methods, as we can Juſtify to God and a good Conſcience.

So that the whole Duty of *Peacemaking* is reduced to This, even to conſider and put in Practice ſuch Methods of *Peacemaking* as are Lawful in Themſelves, and ſuited to that Station which we hold in the World. Now the Rules and Exerciſes of this *Peacemaking* are ſo many, and vary ſo much according to the Circumſtances of Perſons, Time and Place, that it is not probable they can be comprehended within the Limits of a Diſcourſe of this Na-

Nature. Yet I ſhall for your better underſtanding the Meaning and Importance of this Duty endeavour briefly to repreſent to you.

I. Some of the Chief of the General Precepts belonging to it: which may direct to our right Practice of the Duty of *Peacemaking* in general.

2. Some more Particular Precepts relating to the Practice of this Duty under Particular Circumſtances; as we are Members of Eccleſiaſtical, or Civil Society.

As to the General Precepts for *Peacemaking*.

1. Let us believe that nothing is Small or Inconſiderable (howſoever Trifling we may think it in its own Nature) the Doing of which, or the Neglect of which, may occaſion the Exaſperating of our Neighbour, and conſequently the Tranſgreſſing this Duty of *Peacemaking*. If we conſider from how ſmall and inconſiderable Beginnings Contention doth ariſe; and to what incredible Height it will immediately grow, we may eaſily be perſuaded that we can't be too cautious of our Words or Actions, by conſidering not only the immediate Purport and Tendency of them, but even the remote Conſequences, which may be drawn from them by Others, to the creating Contention or Diſturbance. Little did the Women who commended *David* in their Songs, thinking him then the King's Favourite, conſider what a Load of laſting Odium and Perſecution they brought upon him, by their Raſh and ill-

worded Commendation, Preferring his Exploits even to thoſe of the King himſelf. (a) *Saul has ſlain his Thouſands, and David his Ten Thouſands.* The Jealouſy theſe Words raiſed in the King's Breaſt, and the Tragedy which enſued upon that Jealouſy, ſhows us how neceſſary it is to watch every Little Word, or Action, or Omiſſion, that either in it ſelf, or by meeting with the diſtempered Paſſions of Men, may kindle the Fire of Contention. Let this then be the Firſt Rule in this Matter, to avoid Raſhneſs and Inconſideration in our Words and Actions.

2. Becauſe, as our Saviour obſerves, *Out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh*, if we would be ſure not to offend our Neighbour with our Tongue or Hands, let us take Care that we harbour no Rancour, or Malice, or Envy, or Hatred againſt him in our Hearts; but that we be inwardly poſſeſſed with a Spirit of Love and Amity; for it is next to impoſſible to entertain an amicable and peaceable Correſpondence for any long time with thoſe we hate, or have a bad Opinion of. And therefore if there be any Perſons of whom we can't as yet command our ſelves to have this good Opinion, or inward good Affection; it is ſo much the more neceſſary, to ſet a ſtrict Watch upon our ſelves, that we make not ſuch Perſons the Subject of our Diſcourſe, eſpecially before Them, who may make a bad Uſe of it.

(a) 1 Sam. 18. 7.

3. In

3. In order to *Peace-making* it is neceſſary that we ſtudy to be of Meek, Humble, Modeſt and *Peaceable* Tempers our ſelves. For beſides, that if we are otherwiſe, we may be eaſily twitted in the Teeth with a *Phyſician cure thy ſelf*; Perſons of ſuch *unpeaceable* Tempers by their rough Handling the Sores, put the Patients to more Pain, and make them only deſpair of a Cure at the Hands of ſuch unſkilful Chirurgeons: And ſo often leave the Differences between Neighbours worſe than they found them.

4. If we would be *Peace-makers*, there are many uſeful Rules to be obſerved, both as to the Matter and the Manner of our Addreſſes to our Neighbour in that particular, towards the rendering our Endeavours ſucceſsful.

(1.) We are by all Means to avoid a Spirit of Contradiction, as being a great Enemy to this *Peaceable* and *Peace-making* Temper, not that we are obliged always to aſſent to what is advanced by the Company; but firſt of all let us not, as a great many quarrelſom Perſons do, Right or Wrong take up the oppoſite Argument; but rather let us be enclined, as far as Equity, Truth, and Charity will give us leave, to agree; and that very Heartily and Readily; that if it be neceſſary to differ in any Thing, the better Way may be made to what we can't agree, by our *Peaceable* and courteous Compliance with as much as we can.

(2.) But

(2.) But perhaps it is not all Truth, to which we can't Aſſent, that we ſhould think our Selves immediately obliged to contradict. For ſome Truths in Philoſophical, Scholaſtick or Hiſtorical Matters, nay ſome leſſer Things in Religion, are of ſo ſmall Importance, that it is not worth While to venture a Diminution of Peace or Love for the ſake of Them. It is obſerved that our Bleſſed Saviour when he was in the World, tho' he could have rectified many Miſtakes in Matters of Natural Philoſophy, Politicks, Hiſtory, and other Arts and Sciences, yet thought it not worth While to trouble the World with theſe Things, contenting himſelf to undeceive them, and ſet them Right in Matters of Divinity and Morality, which concerned their Salvation. If all Men had been of our Saviour's Temper in this Matter, what an effectual Stop had been put to moſt of the Controverſies which are in the World, being for the moſt Part fierceſt about Matters of ſmalleſt Moment, and the moſt Indifferent to the Salvation of Men?

(3.) When the Truths are of ſuch Importance, that it may be neceſſary to undeceive our Neighbour about them, we are not as yet raſhly to venture upon it, without a great many Precautions in Favour of this Duty of *Peaceableneſs* in my Text. For if either we know him to be ſo wedded to the contrary Error, that he is at that Time only capable of being irritated by Contradiction, but not of giving Ear to the Truth, then perhaps it is bet-

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ter to forbear, and not to caſt our Pearles before Swine; or if we know that he has a particular Averſion to us, and that there are ſome others, from whom the Truth would be received with leſs Prejudice; then perhaps we had better decline the Office our Selves, and put it into the Hands of thoſe others. Or Laſtly, if it be Neceſſary that the Truth come out, and we are the Proper Perſons to convey it to the Man in Error, we muſt for *Peace*'s ſake, be as careful of the Manner in which we deliver it, as of the Matter it ſelf, that it contain nothing but Truth indeed. And therefore the Diſcourſe which conveys it, muſt be ſo cloathed with Humility, Modeſty, Submiſſion, Charity and Courteſy, that it may the better take Place, without encroaching on this Duty of *Peaceableneſs*; as it would certainly do, if it were delivered with an Air of Poſitiveneſs, Paſſion, want of Reſpect, or Affectation of Superiority or Aſcendency. And if ſuch Defects as theſe would endanger the Virtue of *Peaceableneſs*, much more would all Satyrical, Scornful and Reproaching Language or Behaviour in the Delivery of it. So much for the Manner of Contradiction, or offering our Diſſent.

5. If we would be *Peace-makers*, as we muſt be careful not to give Offence to Others, ſo we muſt watch our Selves, that we be not too ready to take Fire, and be offended with the ſeeming Provocations of Others. In this a great deal of Candour and Equity is required in putting the Faireſt Conſtruction

ction on our Neighbours Words and Actions they are capable of; in making Allowances for the Prejudices of their Education and wrong Inſtruction; in being ſparing to revive the Memory of their Miſcarriages, after they have repented of them, and amended them: And in a Readineſs to connive at ſmall Faults, from a common Senſe of Human Infirmity; and to accept of any reaſonable Amends and Satisfaction for greater Ones. For even in Common Life, that Obſervation of our Lord's holds true. (*a*) *It muſt needs be that Offences come.* It is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe; conſidering Human Frailty, and the many Inadvertencies and Miſtakes, beſides the raſh Words and haſty Paſſions of Men. And he that can't either prudently overlook, or patiently digeſt an Injury, he that takes Fire at very raſh Word, and reſents every the ſmalleſt Provocation, muſt reſolve to live in a continual State of War with Mankind, and to bring Daily upon himſelf new Enemies and freſh Quarrels; whereas by a little Patience, and forbearing to take our Revenge, when it is in our Power, our Neighbour's Paſſion would evaporate, and if he has Common Senſe and Conſideration, he would quickly come to himſelf, and obſerve how much he was beholding to our diſcreet Forbearance.

(*a*) Mat. 18. 7.

6. To

6. To this Duty of *Peace making* it is highly requiſite that we avoid Pragmaticalneſs; that is, the needleſs intruding our Selves to meddle with, and to paſs our Cenſure upon other Men's Buſineſs. There is indeed a Charitable and Friendly Conſideration of one another's Circumſtances, which requires that we be mutually helpful *to bear one another's Burdens*; This our Religion calls for, and it were much to be wiſhed that it were more put in Practice. But inſtead of that, we pry into our Neighbours Secrets, that we may Cenſure and find Fault; and are extreme raſh in paſſing our Judgment in every Thing, and do a great deal of Miſchief, by theſe raſh Cenſures, expoſing our Neighbour to the Contempt of others, and ſo often wronging his Intereſt, and hurting his Reputation, and ſowing the Seeds of laſting Diſcord and Contention. This Temper is ſo much the more dangerous, in that commonly it is reſtrained within no Bounds of Reaſon or Religion: No Sacredneſs of the Subject, no Dignity of the Perſon, no want of Intelligence and due Information, no evil Conſequence of expoſing Authority, reſtrains Perſons of this Meddling Temper, from pronouncing their Opinion boldly of the greateſt Myſteries of Religion, of the moſt deliberate Actions of State, of the greateſt Secrets of War and Peace, of the fitneſs or unfitneſs of all Perſons for all Truſt and Buſineſs; and in ſhort it is from this unhappy Temper, that every the ſillieſt Clown will boldly take upon him

him to cenſure the Actions of his Prince or Governour, and as much as in him lyes, to breed and foment thoſe Miſunderſtandings, which being brooded by Diſcontent, and ſpread through great Numbers, come at laſt to end in Schiſms in the Church, and Seditions and Rebellions in the State. (*a*) So *great a Matter doth a little Fire kindle.* There is no greater either Inſtrument or Ornament of *Peace*, than for every Man to keep his own Rank, and to do his own Duty, without uſurping an undue Authority over his Neighbour, or pretending to cenſure his Superiours in Things wherein he himſelf is not juſtly aggrieved.

7. There is no greater Enemy to this Duty of *Peace-making*, than the common Practice of running into Parties and Factions; and eſpouſing theſe Parties by the Lump, ſo as to think our ſelves obliged to defend all their Principles, Cuſtoms, and Actions; and to condemn all thoſe of the Oppoſite Side. This is a Way to propagate Differences from Generation to Generation, and inſtead of Love and Peace, to make it a Duty to propagate a Spirit of Rancour and Animoſity, to vilify and depretiate all the good Things we find in our Adverſaries, purely becauſe they are Theirs; and perhaps to run into the contrary Vices, purely for Diſtinction's Sake. By this Means we confine all

(*a*) Jam. 3. 5.

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our Duty to that of our own Party, and take upon us, as it were to Excommunicate all others, and to think that common Juſtice and Charity is none of their Due. But if ever we Mind to cement into one Body, as our common Chriſtianity obliges us, this Spirit of Faction and Diviſion muſt be totally extirpated; and we muſt learn to be Friends of Truth and Virtue and Goodneſs, wherever we can find them, and to follow Peace with all good Men of whatſoever Denomination.

8. *Laſtly* if we would learn this Duty of *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making*, let us obſerve on the one Hand, what are the uſual Cauſes and Occaſions of Diſcord, and avoid them; and on the other Hand, what are the common Procurers and Promoters of Peace and good Neighbourhood, and in our Practice keep up and encourage them.

Particularly of the Firſt Sort, let us avoid every Thing that ſavours of Pride, Vanity, Couſenage, Oppreſſion, Exaction, Taking Advantage of little Treſpaſſes, Litigiouſneſs, Whiſpering, Tale-bearing, Unneceſſary repeating or aggravating former Miſdemeanors, Cenſoriouſneſs, Diſputaciouſneſs, or whatever is contrary to Chriſtian Civility and Courteſy. It requires a conſtant good Guard upon our Selves, as well as an Univerſal good Will to Mankind, neither to give, nor to be too apt to take Offence. And becauſe there is one general Enemy to this Vigilance over our Selves, namely Drunkenneſs, which drowns Reaſon, and gives a Looſe

Looſe to Paſſion, therefore he who loves Peace, will be upon his Guard againſt this Vice alſo. For (*a*) *Who hath Wo?* ſays Solomon, *Who hath Sorrow? Who hath Contention?* Beſides ſeveral other Miſchiefs there reckoned up; it is *He that tarries long at the Wine:* And intoxicates himſelf with ſtrong Drink.

And of the *Second* Sort, the Procurers of Peace, let us particularly Cheriſh all the Obliging, Endearing, and good natured Virtues; ſuch as Charity, Humanity, Hoſpitality, Civility; and all the Laudable, Innocent, and Friendly Cuſtoms of the Country and Place where we Live, carrying our Selves dutifully to our Superiours, and Modeſtly to our Inferiours; and lovingly and kindly to All; (*b*) *Following Peace with all Men, as well as Holineſs, without which none ſhall ſee God.*

So much for the General Precepts helping us to the Practice of the Duty of *Peaceableneſs* and *Peacemaking.* I ſhould next have proceeded to the Conſideration of ſome more Particular Precepts for this Duty incumbent upon us, as we are Members of Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Society. But being unwilling to treſpaſs on your Patience, I ſhall refer this, to another Opportunity. *Now to God the Father,* &c.

(*a*) Prov. 23. 29. (*b*) Heb. 12. 14.

SER-

SERMON XIII.

MAT. V. 9.

Bleſſed are the Peace-makers: *for they ſhall be called the Children of God.*

The Second Sermon on this Text.

HAVING in a former Diſcourſe entred upon theſe Words, there were Three Things I propoſed to do in the handling of them.

1. To give you a Deſcription of the Duty of *Peace-making.*

2. To conſider the Priviledge Annexed; what it is to be *called the Sons of God.*

3. To ſhew how the Compliance with the Duty of *Peace-making* diſpoſes and entitles us to this Priviledge.

As to the *firſt* of theſe, the Deſcription of the Duty of *Peace-making*, after I had told you *Negatively* what it is not; and ſo cleared it from ſome wrong Notions Men might be apt to have of it; I proceeded to the Poſitive Rules and Exerciſes of it; and finding this a Subject of great Copiouſneſs and Variety, I propoſed

1. To conſider the chief of the General Precepts belonging to it; directing our Practice of the Duty of *Peace-making* in general.

2. To conſider ſome more particular Precepts relating to the Practice of this Duty under particular Circumſtances; as we are Members of Eccleſiaſtical or Civil Society.

As to the General Precepts relating to the Duty of *Peace-making* in general, I then diſpatched them; and ſhall proceed now to the more Particular ones, relating to the Practice of this Duty in particular Circumſtances; as we are Members of Eccleſiaſtical or Civil Society.

I ſhall begin with the Duty of *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making* as we are Members of the Church or Eccleſiaſtical Society. Which Duty is but little underſtood in the Theory, and yet leſs regarded in the Practice. The chief Branches of it, I take to be theſe.

1. That

1. That we carefully avoid all Errors and Hereſies, by acquainting our ſelves with, and firmly believing, and adhering to the Doctrine of the Goſpel as it is left us by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, and recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

2. That in the exerciſe of Church Government and Diſcipline, we ſubmit our ſelves to ſuch Rulers, Paſtors and Teachers, as *Chriſt* has appointed in his Church.

3. That we preſerve Peace and Union with all Members of the Chriſtian Church, unleſs ſinful Terms of Communion are required.

4. That we exerciſe Brotherly Love ſo far as to allow Chriſtian Liberty in Things indifferent to all other Churches; without condemning them for not complying exactly with our Model.

5. That there be a mutual Propenſity and Inclination to Peace, by Sacrificing our private Opinions in leſſer things, and yeilding all we can for Peace's Sake.

Theſe being Things of great Importance, and highly tending to the Peace of the Church, will require to be a little better explained, in order to their being rightly apprehended, and put in Practice.

1. The firſt thing then I recommend in order to the Peace of the Church, is a Knowledge and Belief, and firm Profeſſion of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, as delivered by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, and recorded in the Holy Scriptures. This Foundation, being

once well laid, would prevent a great many Schiſmatical Principles and Practices, which for want of a due regard to it, have been ſet up in the Church, and have there kindled the Fire of Contention. For 1. It is for want of Minding this Foundation, that the Church of *Rome* has taken upon her to impoſe ſo many other things as Doctrines, and to enjoin the Belief of them as neceſſary to Salvation. The Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church ſhould always remember, that tho' they are *Chriſt's* Delegates, and have his Commiſſion, it is not an Arbitrary Commiſſion, to teach and enjoyn what they pleaſe; But a Commiſſion directed and limited with Abundance of Inſtructions, which if they ſhould take upon them to falſify or tranſgreſs, both they are Accountable to their great Maſter for the Higheſt Breach of Truſt, and the People likewiſe are exempted from their Obedience to them in all ſuch Particulars. *Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, Preach any other Goſpel unto you than that which we have Preached unto you, let him be accurſed*; ſaith St. *Paul*, Gal. i. 8. This I look upon as the greateſt Infringement of the Peace of the Church, when any Particular Church takes upon them to Teach and impoſe for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. 2. All Enthuſiaſts, who leaving the Rule of the Holy Scriptures ſet up the private Spirit as the Guide, without any other Limitation or inſtruction, are bold Invaders of the Peace of the Church; For that is all one, as if in Temp-

rals we ſhould lay aſide all Laws, and leave every Man to do what ſeems good in his own Eyes. 3. All they who take upon them to impoſe forced and conſtrained Senſes on the Holy Scripture, againſt the true literal Meaning of it, that they may bend it to their own Reaſon, being reſolved to admit of nothing in Religion above what our weak Reaſon can comprehend, are highly culpable againſt this firſt Rule of the Churches Peace; for there is but little difference between laying aſide a Rule or Law altogether, and the detorting it to a Senſe, which we our Selves can't believe was ever intended.

But I confeſs I can't reckon in this Number of the Tranſgreſſors of the Churches Peace thoſe who do their beſt, to find out the true Senſe and Meaning of the Holy Scripture; when either through Weakneſs of Capacity, or for want of ſufficient Helps to underſtand the Scriptures, or by reaſon of the Deepneſs of the Myſtery, or the difficulty of the Scripture it ſelf (for in all things it is not alike plain) they miſs of the true Senſe and Meaning of it, and purely upon that Account fall into any Error either of Judgment or Practice; provided they are not obſtinate in it, but willing to hear Reaſon, and to yield to it, as far as they find themſelves Convinced: For this is no more than what the ſincereſt Inquirers into Truth are ſubject to, in this imperfect State, where we ſee but in Part, and know but in Part; though, God be thanked, all that is neceſſary to Salvation, is ſo

clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures, that he that ſtudies it there with a ſincere Mind may find it and put it in Practice.

2. A ſecond Thing I mentioned as to the Peace of the Church, was that in the Exerciſe of Church Government and Diſcipline, we ſubmit our ſelves to ſuch Rulers, Paſtors, and Teachers as *Chriſt* hath appointed in his Church. It is very plain in the *New Teſtament*, that our Saviour erected all Chriſtian Believers into one Body or Society, called the Church; That out of them he choſe ſome, with a a Power of Teaching and Guiding Others in the way of Salvation, whom he called *Apoſtles*; that he likewiſe gave theſe Apoſtles Power of Ordaining others, both to take part of this Care in their Life time, and to ſucceed them in the whole after their Deceaſe: Men ſet a part from the World, who ſhould addict themſelves to this great Work, the care of Souls: An Inſtitution of abſolute Uſe and Neceſſity to the end of World; for what Confuſion muſt it let in to any Society, where all are alike, none to Direct, none to Obey; where every one invades the Teachers Office at Pleaſure, and this ſacred Order of the Miniſtry is caſt in common to every Bold Invader? Now this wholſom Inſtitution has been many Ways neglected and overthrown, to the utter Deſtruction of Peace and good Order in the Church. For the *Quakers* and ſome other Enthuſiaſts have made an open Inſurrection againſt the ſacred Order of the Miniſtry, like *Corah*

rah Dathan, and *Abiram*, who roſe up againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and pretended that the whole Congregation was Holy. They have given Leave to Men without any External Call from the Church, if they have but Confidence enough to pretend to an Inward Call of the Spirit, to invade theſe ſacred Offices; and not only ſo, but to deliver what Doctrine they themſelves pleaſe, without giving any Account to the Rulers of the Church. And the Church of *Rome* has taken another way to invade the Peace of the Church in this particular; for the Miniſtry which by *Chriſt* was left in common to all the Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors, they have by an unheard of Piece of Tyranny limited to one Man, whom they ſet up with an uncontroulable Power to Trample upon all the other Biſhops and and Paſtors, and to countenance an infinite Number of Abuſes and Corruptions, chiefly brought into the Church, to ſupport his Worldly Pomp and Grandeur. Theſe are the two chief Invaſions, which have been made on the Order of Paſtors in the Chriſtian Church, by the Enthuſiaſts on the one Hand, and the *Papiſts* on the other; though it can't be denied that other very conſiderable Encroachments have been made on the Peace of Church in this particular, by ſome who have overthrown the ancient Order of Epiſcopacy, to ſet up a Parity in the ſtead of it, which is always the Mother of Confuſion; and by others, who have ſo encroached upon the Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline in the Hands of

the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church, that they have confounded the Spiritual with the ſecular Sword; and by the New Doctrine of Eraſtianiſm have deſtroyed the Diſcipline and Government of the Church: To that degree that there is a New Hereſie ſprung up in our Days, which deſtroys the very Being of the Church as a Society, and makes it a mere Creature of the State. So many ways has Satan with his Inſtruments endeavoured to over-turn this wholſom Order, at firſt appointed by *Chriſt* for ſo many good Ends and Purpoſes in his Church, particularly for the Preſervation of Peace, Diſcipline, and good Government.

3. But though our great Care ought to be firſt for the Purity of Doctrine and Worſhip; next for ſuch Paſtours and Government as *Chriſt* hath ſet up in his Church; yet there is another Rule of Church-Peace as neceſſary as any of theſe: And that is, that we preſerve Peace and Union with all the Parts and Members of the Chriſtian Church, unleſs ſinful Terms of Communion with them are required. The zealous Gentlemen that inſiſt ſo earneſtly for the good Government and Diſcipline of the Ancient Church, as if it were abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, put me in Mind of a juſt Complaint of *Tullie*'s againſt *Cato*; that he gave his Opinion always in the *Senate*, as if he had been living in *Plato*'s Common-wealth, and not among the Dregs of *Romulus*. It is a much more proper Inquiry for us, what we may and ought to comply with for Peace's

Sake

Sake, in this corrupt State of the Church, than what thoſe Noble Primitive Chriſtians arrived at. We muſt not for every thing that is amiſs break away, and make a Rent and Schiſm from the Body of the Church; If we do, I know not where we ſhall find a Church in the World at this Day ſo perpect, in which there are not many Things amiſs; and which a good Man would not wiſh to be otherwiſe. The Queſtion is which Way we may beſt contribute our Pains towards the Amendment or Reformation of them, whether by Continuing in the Church, or by Abandoning it? Which ſeems to me much ſuch a Diſpute, as if ſome more Angry than Skilful Men at Sea in a Leaky Ship, which yet by Working duly at the Pump, and Caulking, and Stopping the Leaks, would make very good Way, and at laſt carry the Paſſengers ſafe to their intended Port; as if, I ſay, theſe angry Men in ſuch a Veſſel ſhould be for making a Mutiny among the Seamen and Paſſengers on this Account; and propoſe the leaving the Ship, and betaking themſelves, ſome to the Long Boat, and ſome to the Pinnace for their Safety, and better diſpatch of their Voyage. So I think the true Queſtion ſhould not be whether the Church we are in, is without Fault or Blemiſh, or whether She is to be compared, eſpecially for Exactneſs of Diſcipline, with the Pure Primitive Church; Such a one as is not now to be found upon Earth; no more than perhaps there is any Civil Government equal to *Plato*'s Common-wealth; but whe-

whether it is not a Church, in which we may very well make a good Voyage to Heaven? And whether the Faults that are in it may not be better mended by our Staying in it, than by our Forſaking it, and betaking our ſelves to the Meeting or Conventicle? I confeſs if there is any ſuch great Leak as can not be ſtopt; and which if it be not ſtopt will ſink the Ship, and drown the Paſſengers; ſuch a Ship is at laſt to be abandoned; that is, if there is any one ſinful Condition of Communion required of us, ſuch as will endanger our Salvation, then after all other Endeavours to amend it, let us leave ſuch a Church in God's Name; And this was our Caſe with the Church of *Rome*, which would not permit us to continue in her Communion, without profeſſing ſeveral erroneous Doctrines, and Joining in ſeveral Parts of Idolatrous Worſhip; But if there is no ſinful Condition of Communion required of us in the Reformed Churches, though there are ſome Things amiſs in them all, let us ſo far ſtudy Peace, as to make no Separation from ſuch Churches, but quietly work out our Salvation in them, ſtriving in our ſeveral Stations to reform and improve them to the beſt Advantage.

4. It is a good Rule of Peace in the Church, to remember that the Points of mere Order and Decency are for the moſt part wiſely left by our Saviour and his *Apoſtles* under General Rules, and the particular Rites and Ceremonies which may be conſtituted in Conſequence of thoſe General Rules, are va-

various and alterable; and therefore great Grains of Allowance ſhould be made to particular Churches, to ſettle or vary them according to the different Circumſtances of Time and Place, and the various Diſpoſitions of the Perſons, of whom that particular Church doth conſiſt. We ought then to endeavour to lay no greater Streſs on theſe Matters, than according to the Importance of them; and to comply with ſuch innocent Cuſtoms, as are eſtabliſhed in the particular Church where we reſide; but at the ſame Time to have a Care, that we condemn not other Churches, which have judged quite different Rites more decent and proper. And though we ourſelves ſhould happen to differ in our private Judgment, as to the Conveniency or Inconveniency of any of thoſe Rites; while our Scruples are not about the Lawfulneſs or Unlawfulneſs, but only the Expediency of ſuch Things, it is very fit for Peace's Sake, that we ſacrifice all ſuch Scruples to the Order and Authority of the Government in Church or State, under which we live

5. Laſtly there is another Rule of Peace recommended by St. *Paul*; that in the uſe of Chriſtian Liberty great Regard is to be had to the Infirmities of our weak Brethren; leſt they ſhould be offended by our otherwiſe juſt Uſe of it. That great Controverſy which broke out ſo early in the Church between the Judaizing, and not the Judaizing Chriſtians, with the many Rules for Peace and Chriſtian Condeſcenſion laid down by St. *Paul* in the

the managing of it, ſhould be a laſting Leſſon to us for Moderation, in treating one another in our far leſs conſiderable Differences; which for want of the like Chriſtian Spirit we have carried to ſuch Unreaſonable Heats and Diviſions.

Thus much I thought proper to offer with Relation to our Duty of *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making*, as we are Members of the Church, or of an Eccleſiaſtical Society. The neglect of ſuch Uſeful Rules has filled the Church with ſo many Schiſms and Diviſions, as rend it in ſunder at this Day.

II. But as we are Members of the Church, we muſt remember that we are likewiſe Members of the State, and that there is a great Part of the Duty of *Peace-making* relates to our quiet Deportment under the ſeveral Civil Governments, we are Subjects of in the World. It is therefore a thing of great Conſequence that we have right Notions of our Duty in this Reſpect. I ſhall as briefly as I can, guard you againſt ſome Principles, which have been advanced very deſtructive of the Civil Peace; and at the ſame Time endeavour to principle you with true Chriſtian Notions in thoſe Matters, and ſo to have done; for I perceive I ſhall get no further at this Time than the Deſcription of the Duty of *Peace-making*.

1. *Firſt* then, One Falſe Notion in this Matter is that a great many Men have thought it was every ones Buſineſs to reform Abuſes and Corruptions,

not

not only in their own Station (which would have been right) but by invading the Stations of Others, Magiſtrates, Legiſlators, Princes and Governours; which is the high Way, inſtead of Peace, to drive all Things to Anarchy and Confuſion. Now as God is a God of Order, our Religion requires that every Man keep within his Own Sphere, and be not a Buſy Body in other Men's Matter. If Grievances in any State can not be remedied upon our Humble Petition, Private Men muſt wait patiently, and neither ſtir up Diſcontents againſt the Government, nor flee to Arms, or any other irregular Methods of Redreſs.

2. Some have had ſo wrong Notions of Goſpel Liberty, as if it exempted them from the Civil Duties they owe to their Superiours; nay ſome have been carried to that degree of Fanatical Deluſion, as to believe that Dominion is founded in Grace; and that this World with the Poſſeſſion and Government of it, belongs to the Saints, which Saints they take to be Themſelves. A Principle which would ſet all immediately in a Flame, and turn the Kingdom of *Chriſt* into one of the worſt Worldly Kingdoms.

3. There are ſome who have ſo wrong Notions of the Power of Human Governments, eſpecially in the Externals and Ceremonials of Religion, that they think They can enjoyn nothing, but what is already enjoined by the Laws of God: Whereas it is ſufficient to recommend to us any Human Laws in theſe things, that

that they be not contrary or diſagreeable to God's Laws; between which two Notions there is a very wide Difference.

4. There is both an Active, and a Paſſive Obedience due to Civil Governments; but the Rules and Meaſures of both have been very much miſtaken and miſrepreſented; which has occaſioned that the Doctrines themſelves have been ridiculed in Theory, and utterly neglected in Practice, to the total Overthrow of all the Principles upon which the Peace of Civil Governments doth ſubſiſt. The ſhort of the Matter is, that whatever Form of Civil Government is by Law eſtabliſhed in any Country, the Chriſtian Religion requires us to ſubmit our ſelves to it, not only for Wrath but for Conſcience Sake. And therefore They who have pretended to flatter Princes, and to enſlave Subjects, by endeavouring to prove from *Scripture*, that it countenances no Government but that of Abſolute Monarchy; that is, Monarchy unlimited by any Laws; and that all People were obliged either Actively or Paſſively to obey not only the Legal, but the Arbitrary and Illegal Commands of their Princes, have dangerouſly miſtaken and miſrepreſented the Chriſtian Doctrine, and brought a Scandal on our Religion, as if it enjoined the Doctrines of Tyranny and Slavery, and tended to the utter Overthrow of Liberty and Property among Men: Whereas it is the Eſtabliſhed Laws and Conſtitution of every Country, which is the Rule both of our Active and Paſ-

Paſſive Obedience in that Country; and it is a great Miſtake to think that the Chriſtian Religion encroaches on any Man's or any Country's Liberty or Property, further than the Laws and Conſtitution of the ſeveral Chriſtian Countreys think fit to preſcribe and direct. Chriſtianity does indeed require our Obedience upon better Principles, I mean the Principles of Conſcience; and upon a better Sanction, namely that of Eternal Rewards and Puniſhments; but ſtill it is the ſame Legal Obedience, which is enjoined by the Laws and Conſtitution, and no other. And certainly Paſſive Obedience and Non-reſiſtance, in this Senſe, are ſo far from being Formidable or Enſlaving Doctrines, that they are no more in effect, than if we ſhould exhort Subjects to obey the Laws of their Country, in ſo far as they are not contrary to the Laws of God; and if they are contrary to any of God's Laws, or if they in their conſcience think them ſo; that then they ſhould ſubmit to the Penalty, and not riſe in Rebellion againſt the Government. A Doctrine ſo neceſſary for the Support of all Governments, that it is not eaſy to conceive how they can ſubſiſt without it.

Perhaps it would not have been improper upon this Subject, to have conſidered not only, as I have now done, the Principles of *Peaceableneſs*, as we are Members of the Church, and Subjects of the State, to avoid Schiſm in the one, and Sedition in the other; but likewiſe the Peace of Families, Neighbourhoods, and leſſer Corporations and Societies;

eties; together with the Common Differences, Controverſies and Law Suits, which are incident to diſturb it; But beſides that Time will not permit, I think it needleſs to enter further into theſe Things, ſeeing for the clear underſtanding our Duty in all the various Caſes which may happen, we want only a diſcreet Application of the General Rules of Peace; of which I diſcourſed at the laſt Occaſion.

And therefore referring only the Promiſe here annexed to the *Peace-makers*, to another Opportunity, I ſhall now make an End of my Deſcription of the Duty of *Peaceableneſs*; which I pray God, ſo to engraft in all our Hearts, that we may not only live quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty here upon Earth: but at laſt may attain to everlaſting Peace and Reſt with him in the Kingdom of Heaven, through the Mediation of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour *Chriſt Jeſus*. *To whom*, &c.

SER-

SERMON XIV.

MAT. V. 9.

Bleſſed are the Peace-makers: **for they ſhall be called the Children of God.**

The Third Sermon on this Text.

NOT to trouble you with the Repetition of what I have in Two former Diſcourſes ſaid upon theſe Words; It ſhall ſuffice to acquaint you that I have already diſpatched.

1. The *Firſt* Thing I propoſed to conſider from them; Namely the Deſcription of the Duty of *Peaceableneſs*, or *Peace-making*.

There are Two Things more remain to be ſpoke to from the Words, both contained in the Promiſe annexed to this *Beatitude*, namely.

2. What it is *To be called the Children of God.*

3. How *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making* diſpoſes and entitles us to this Priviledge. Both which I intend, God willing, to diſcourſe of at this Time.

II. The next Thing then we are to conſider is the Meaning and Importance of this Priviledge; What it is *To be called the Children of God.* In order to which there are theſe *Three* Things will be proper to be enquired into.

1. What is the Meaning of Being *The Children of God?*

2. What is the Meaning of *Being called the Children of God?*

3. How this is verified of the *Peace-makers*, that *They ſhall be called the Children of God?*

I. *Firſt* we are to enquire, what is meant by being *The Children of God.* In the *Scripture* Phraſe They are figuratively denominated the Children of any Perſon, who reſemble that Perſon in his Qualities, good or bad; thus the Children of *Abraham* are they who imitate the Faith of *Abraham.* Children of *Belial* are wicked Men, who take after a wicked Perſon. In this Senſe a Child of God is one who imitates God in his imitable Perfections. One that has many God-like Qualities, bearing a Reſemblance to thoſe which are in God himſelf, by

which he is ſo Gracious and Beneficial to Mankind. See *Luke* vi. 35. Another Notion of it is they who are beloved of God. *Luke* xx. 36.

II. *Secondly* we are to enquire what it is to be *Called the Children of God?* This may denote 1. The Honourable Eſteem ſuch Perſons meet with among good Men in this World. 2. The favourable Approbation of God himſelf, with the Rewards of Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

III. We are to enquire how this is verified of the *Peace-makers*, that *They ſhall be called the Children of God.* To this I ſhall anſwer in the following Propoſitions.

1. *Firſt*, That *They ſhall be called the Children of God* may denote the high Eſteem they ſhall be in among Good Men, and the Honourable Compellations which ſhall be given them in the Church, who are of ſuch a Peaceable, Healing Spirit. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* in a Diſcourſe in which he recommends this Peaceable Spirit, *Rom.* 14. uſes this Argument for Peace, that as it is a thing acceptable to God, ſo it is approved of Men. *Rom.* xiv. 17, 18, 19. *For the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink*, ſaith he, *but Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. For he that in theſe Things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God and approved of Men. Let us therefore follow the Things which make for Peace, and Things wherewith one may ediſy another.*

And *Ph.* ii. 14, 15. he inſinuates plainly what a ſhining Honour and Glory this Virtue of *Peaceableneſs* will give them in the World. *Do all Things without Murmurings and Diſputings: that ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the Sons of God without Rebuke in the Mids of a crooked and perverſe Generation, among whom ye ſhine as Lights in the World.* And in the Third *Chapter* of that ſame *Epiſtle*, he adviſes that a particular Mark of Honour ſhould be put on them, who were of this Peaceable Spirit. *v.* 16, & 17. *Nevertheleſs*, ſays he, *Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame Rule, let us mind the ſame Thing. Brethren be Followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an Enſample.* And as he adviſes to put a Mark of Honour on thoſe who were *Peaceable*; ſo elſewhere he adviſes to put a particular Mark of Diſhonour on the Enemies of Peace, and the Fomenters of Diviſions. *Rom.* xvi. 17. *Now I beſeech you Brethren*, ſays he, *Mark them which cauſe Diviſions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.* So that it is plain that *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* deſigned and expected that Perſons of a peaceable Temper and Diſpoſition ſhould be had in particular Eſtimation in the Church, as being *Children of God*, reſembling God and our Maſter *Chriſt*.

2. *Secondly*, Their being *Called the Children of God* may denote that this Virtue of *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making* is a ſure Mark of a Child of God; and

that

that wherever it is found, it ſhall be owned as ſuch, both by God and Men. *In this the Children of God are manifeſt*, ſaith St. *John*, *And the Children of the Devil: whoſoever doth not Righteouſneſs, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother.* 1 John iii. 10. *If ye have bitter Envying and Strife in your Hearts*, ſaith St. James iii. 14. *Glory not and lye not againſt the Truth; this Wiſdom deſcendeth not from Above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh. For where Envying and Strife is, there is Confuſion and every evil Work. But the Wiſdom that is from Above is firſt Pure, then Peaceable*, &c.

3. *Thirdly*, The *Peaceable* and *Peace-makers* may be underſtood to be called the Sons of God, by the Teſtimony and Approbation God gives them, owning them as his Sons, by the large Gift of Chriſtian Graces he beſtows upon them here; and by the Aſſignment of the Inheritance, the Childrens Portion hereafter.

1. *Firſt* he beſtows upon them a very large Gift of Chriſtian Graces here. This one Chriſtian Virtue has ſo many good Qualities ingredient in it, or by God's Bleſſing uſually annexed; that if we put them together, they will amount to an ample Declaration in Favour of the *Peaceable* and *Peace-making* Perſon, that he is a Child of God. I ſhall reckon up ſome of the Chief of them, from which it may be eaſily gathered that this *Peaceableneſs* is a great Bundle, in which all other Virtues are bound up; and that it may deſervedly be called *the Bond of*

Peace; as well becauſe it tyes Virtues, as Perſons together.

(1.) *Firſt* then, This *Peaceable* Man enjoys a great deal of inward Tranquility, and Freedom from diſturbing and diſtracting Luſts and Paſſions; whereas *The Wicked is like the troubled Sea when it can not reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt. There is no Peace ſaith my God to the Wicked,* Iſ. lvii. 20.

(2.) The *Peaceable* Man is much in the Exerciſe of Devotion of all Sorts, both for God's Aſſiſtance to the Succeſs of his lawful Endeavours, and for his Bleſſing to Princes and other Subordinate Magiſtrates, whoſe chief Buſineſs it is to promote, and preſerve Peace and good Order in the World. 1 *Tim.* ii. 1, 2. *I exhort therefore*, ſaith St. Paul, *That firſt of all Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men: for Kings, and all that are in Authority*; To what End? *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.*

(3.) The *Peaceable* Man is commonly endowed with Prudence, having a wiſe Foreſight of the Evil of Diviſions; and therefore he avoids them as much as is poſſible; whereas the Contentious Haſty Man involves himſelf in Quarrels before he conſiders, or is aware of the Conſequences. *He that is ſlow to Wrath*, ſaith Solomon, *is of great Underſtanding; but he that is haſty of Spirit exalteth Folly.* Pr. xiv. 29. And in another Place of the ſame Chapter, *He that is ſoon angry dealeth fooliſhly.*

(4.) The

(4.) The *Peaceable* Man is commonly bleſt with thoſe Characters of *Chriſt* himſelf; *Meekneſs and Humility*: The contrary of which *Solomon* obſerves to be the Occaſions of Strife. (*a*) *Only by Pride cometh Contention; but with the well adviſed is Wiſdom.* And again; (*b*) *A ſoft Anſwer turneth away Wrath, but grievous Words ſtir up Anger.*

(5.) Together with this of Meekneſs, we may join the good Government of the Tongue, as an excellent Mark of a Child of God, with which the *Peaceable* Man is bleſt. St. *James* tells us, *Chap.* i. 26, *If any Man among you ſeem to be Religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain.* And *Solomon* has ſeveral Remarks of the *Peaceable* Man's excelling in this Talent. In general he obſerves, of the Man that governs his Tongue, that he keeps himſelf out of Trouble. *Whoſo keepeth his Mouth and his Tongue,* ſaith he, *keepeth his Soul from Trouble,* Prov. xxi. 23. Particularly he obſerves that he abſtains from thoſe Follies and Vices of the Tongue, which commonly create Contention, ſuch as is the Meddling Temper, *Prov.* xxvi. 17. *He that paſſeth by, and meddleth with Strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a Dog by the Ears.* And the whiſpering Tale-bearing Temper. *Prov.* xxvi. 20. *Where no Wood is, the Fire goeth out; So where there is no Tale-bearer, the Strife*

(*a*) Prov. 13. 10. (*b*) Prov. 15. 1.

ceaſeth; and elſewhere he obſerves, that *the Whiſperer ſeparateth chief Friends.* And the blabbing leaky Temper, which can keep no Secrets. *Prov.* xi. 13. *A Tale-bearer revealeth Secrets: but he that is of a faithful Spirit concealeth the Matter.* And the haſty Temper. *Prov.* xii. 16. *A Fool's Wrath is preſently known.* And the Satyrical Temper. *Prov.* xxvi. 18. *As a mad Man who caſteth Fire-brands, Arrows and Death: So is the Man that deceiveth his Neighbour, and ſaith, am not I in jeſt?* And the inſulting Temper. *Prov.* xxi. 24. *Proud and Haughty Scorner is his Name who dealeth in proud Wrath.* And the furious Temper. *Prov.* xxii. 24. *Make no Friendſhip with an angry Man, and with a furious Man thou ſhall not go.*

(6.) The *Peaceable* Man is commonly a Juſt Man, and far from offering any Injury to his Neighbour; he is not for breaking into old Settlements, or for removing the ancient Land Marks, *Prov.* xxii. 28.

(7) The *Peaceable* Man is a Charitable Man in treating an Enemy. *Solomon* obſerves that he neither takes Fire quickly; nor thinks it ſo much Honour to retaliate, as to pardon an Injury, *Prov.* xix. 11. *The Diſcretion of a Man deferreth his Anger, and it is his Glory to paſs over a Tranſgreſſion.*

(8.) The *Peaceable* Man is very well qualified for preſerving Friendſhip; as not eaſily taking Exceptions, and ſhewing a Readineſs for mutual good Offices; as knowing that *He who hath Friends muſt ſhew himſelf friendly*, Prov. xviii. 24.

(9.) *Peace-*

(9.) *Peaceableneſs* goes a great way in the Compoſition of the Happineſs of the Married State, making the moſt ordinary Circumſtances go down with Pleaſure and Contentment. For *Better is a Dinner of Herbs where Love is, than a ſtalled Ox and Hatred therewith*, Prov. xv. 17.

(10.) The ſame Temper has a viſible Tendency to Loyalty and the Peace of all Societies, both Sacred and Civil. For it is a Temper which doth not care to *Meddle with them that are given to Change.*

(11.) *Laſtly*, the *Peaceable* Man has a good Government of himſelf. For it is the ſame Stayedneſs and Moderation of Spirit, which keeps a Man from falling out with others, that makes him eaſie in himſelf, and helps him on all Occaſions to preſerve his Temper.

2. As God owns the *Peaceable* Man for his Child by the large Portion of Chriſtian Graces he beſtows upon him in this Life, ſo he will likewiſe own him by the Eternal Inheritance, the Childrens Portion he will beſtow upon him in Heaven. At the great Day of Accounts, they ſhall be ſignally owned as the Children of God, in the preſence of Men and Angels; when their Labours of Love, their Patience of Injuries, their keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, and all the other bleſſed Fruits and Effects of their *Peaceable* and Reconciling Tempers ſhall be honourably acknowledged by our great Lord and Maſter *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the ſureſt Marks of his Diſciples and Followers, and rewarded accord-

cordingly. And this I take to be the principal Senſe, in which this Promiſe is verified to the *Peace-makers*; even that great Declaration which ſhall be made in their favour, at the great Day of Judgment, Determining who are, and who are not the Children of God; and who ſhall be admitted to, and who excluded from the Inheritance prepared for them. *They are made equal to the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Reſurrection. Luke* xx. 36. So much for the firſt Thing I propoſed to conſider from this Promiſe in the Text; What it is to be called the Sons of God.

III. The next is, to enquire how *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making* diſpoſes and entitles us to this Priviledge? For clearing this Matter I ſhall.

1. Shew how this Temper makes us reſemble God.

2. How it diſpoſes us for the reception of thoſe Graces, which are the peculiar Characters of the Children of God here; and for that Eternal Happineſs, which is prepared for them in Heaven.

3. What Promiſes God has made of that Happineſs to the *Peaceable* and *Peace-makers*.

Firſt, I am to ſhew how this Temper of *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making* is a Reſemblance of God: For I told you before, that in the Scripture Phraſe, they are ſaid to be the Children of any Perſon, who reſemble him in his Qualities, Good or Bad. Now the *Peace-maker* doth very much reſemble God in

in his gracious Diſpenſations towards the Children of Men. For is it not the great Work and Deſign which God has been carrying on by the Miniſtry of his Son and Servants; the buſineſs of *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, of *Chriſt* and the *Apoſtles*, and of all who have ſucceeded them in the care of Souls, to make Peace between God and Man? This is all our Buſineſs to reconcile you to God; and therefore *Peace-makers* and Reconcilers in ſo far reſemble God Almighty; they are Acted by the ſame Spirit, and therefore may be called the Sons of God. As Martial Men we call the Sons of *Mars*; Voluptuous Men, the Sons of *Venus*; Learned Men the Sons of *Apollo*; ſo *Peaceable* Men the Sons of God. And to caſt further Light on this Notion, it is to be obſerved that one of the Titles God takes to himſelf, by which he is often Styled in the *New Teſtament*, is that of *the God of Peace*. And *Chriſt* is called *the Prince of Peace*. And therefore *Peace-makers* are the Sons of this God.

Again, as one great part of God's Work is to reconcile us to himſelf; ſo another part of it is to reconcile us to one another. The great Partition wall between *Jew* and *Gentile* is now pulled down. All differences among Men occaſioned by Birth and Ceremony are now aboliſhed. All Men are now invited to a Participation of the Benefits of the Goſpel. The Legacy left by *Chriſt* to his Diſciples is that of Love and Peace; Pride, and Self Love, and Self Seeking, and every Thing elſe, which is in-

inconſiſtent with this Spirit, is the moſt directly levelled at, to be battered and beat down by the Chriſtian Morals; So that there is nothing has been more laboured by God than the eſtabliſhing of Peace in the World, that he may well be called *the God of Peace*, and *Peace-makers his Children.*

Secondly; *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making* diſpoſes us for the Reception of thoſe Graces, which are the peculiar Characters of the Children of God here, and likewiſe for that Eternal Happineſs which is prepared for them in Heaven. It is very remarkable what the Pſalmiſt ſaith to this Purpoſe, Pſ. xxv. 9. *The Meek will he guide in Judgment, and the Meek will he teach his Way:* Intimating the neceſſity of avoiding Anger and Contention, in order to our receiving the Influences of God's Holy Spirit. The ſame is held forth in a pretty alluſion, 1. Kings xix. 11, 12 & 13. *verſes*, where in a Viſion of God to the Prophet *Elijah*, it is obſerved that as the Lord paſſed by, *there was a great and ſtrong Wind, which rent the Mountains; but the Lord was not in the Wind: And after the Wind, an Earthquake; but the Lord was not in the Earthquake: And after the Earthquake, a Fire; but the Lord was not in the Fire: And after the Fire, a ſtill ſmall Voice. Then the Lord ſpake:* Teaching us that it is not in the Heats and Noiſe of Contention, but in Peace and Silence, that God viſits us, and teaches us his Truths. And for the future State of Felicity, what can diſpoſe us better for it than a *Peaceable* Temper, whether

we

we conſider the Relation we ſhall there ſtand in to God, or to our Fellow Creatures; or the inward Peace and Tranquility of our own Minds. For 1. What can better diſpoſe us for the Happineſs of the Kingdom of Heaven, than ſuch a *Peaceable* Diſpoſition, as will prepare us with the profoundeſt Veneration, Love and Obedience, to comply readily with all the Dictates of Almighty God? Was it not the want of this, which threw the Apoſtate Angels out of thoſe Heavenly Manſions, even their unpeaceable Spirit, which diſpoſed them to Rebellion againſt God? What can be more neceſſary to the Happineſs of the Subjects of any Society than the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Governours, and the Quietneſs and *Peaceableneſs* of the Governed? No doubt that will be one great Part of the Felicity of Heaven, that as they ſhall be governed by unerring Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, ſo they will be all ſo ſenſible of the Happineſs of ſuch a Government, that there will not be the leaſt unpeaceable Principle or Practice among any of the Bleſſed Subjects of it; but the wiſe Commands of God, ſhall be attended with a Peaceable and ready Complyance of all the Inhabitants of that *New Jeruſalem*. 2. If we conſider the relation we ſhall then ſtand in to our fellow Creatures, the Saints and Angels, who ſhall be joined with us in the Society of that Bleſſed Kingdom, who are called *the Sons of God*. *Job* xxxviii. 7. with relation to them, I ſay, whatDuty more proper, than Peace and Har-

Harmony, Love and Friendſhip? This no doubt will add very conſiderably to the Felicity of that Bleſſed State, that *there* will be no Contentions, Animoſities or Diviſions, but we ſhall have the Pleaſure of Dwelling together like Brethren in Unity. And therefore there can be nothing more neceſſary to diſpoſe and qualify us for this Society of the Sons of God in Heaven, than the exerciſe of this Bleſſed Temper of *Peaceableneſs* and *Peace-making* upon Earth. 3. If we regard the Inward Peace and Tranquility of our own Minds, which is a principal and moſt eſſential Ingredient in all Happineſs, we ſhall find that nothing contributes more to it, than *Peaceableneſs:* For that is eſſential to Contentment, which is the Life of Happineſs it ſelf. And I know no greater Commendation of Religion in general, than that it lays all the Inteſtine Commotions between our Reaſon and our Luſts; that it ſatisfies all our Deſires, by fixing our Hearts on the Chief Good; and that it confers upon us that Peace of Conſcience, which is a Continual Feaſt: In ſhort that as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Great Peace have they, who love God's Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* And if this inward Peace is ſo great a Bleſſing here, how much greater will it be in Heaven, both becauſe our Conqueſt over our Luſts ſhall then be incomparably more perfect; whereas here it is often Doubtful: And becauſe it will be then perfectly ſecure; free from all fear of Relapſe.

Laſtly

Laſtly Peaceableneſs entitles us to the Priviledge of being adjudged the Sons of God, becauſe the Inheritance due to God's Children is promiſed to them. Among the other Bleſſings of the *Peaceable* Temper, Pſ. cxxxiii. 3. It is ſaid of it, *that God commanded his Bleſſing to attend it, even Life for evermore.* And among the Things which exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven, Gal. v. 20. are reckoned up *Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath and Strife*; of all which it is there ſaid, as well as of the other Works of the Fleſh, that *they who do ſuch Things, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And what can be more expreſs than my Text? *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers for they ſhall be called*, that is adjudged, *the Children of God.*

Seeing then this Virtue of *Peaceableneſs* or *Peacemaking* has ſo great an influence on our Felicity, let us with the utmoſt care apply our ſelves to the ſtudy and Practice of it. There is indeed one great Part of the Peace of Mankind, which depends ſo much on the Higher Powers of the Earth, that we can contribute little more towards it than, as the Apoſtle exhorts, by our Prayers for them, *That we may Live, Quiet and Peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.* As for the Peace of the Country where we Live, we can to our Prayers add our earneſt Endeavours in our ſeveral Stations, to remove the occaſions of Differences, and to keep up a good Underſtanding both with our Rulers, and fellow Subjects. As to the Peace of the Neighbourhood, we

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can do ſtill a great deal more, by diſcountenancing all Factious, Tale-bearing and Malicious Perſons, and by promoting Love and good Neighbourhood, both by our Diſcourſe and Example. As to the Peace of Families, there is nothing more neceſſary than that we all ſtudy to curb our Paſſions, and whether we govern, or obey, that we do it with a Spirit of Meekneſs. And laſtly in order to all theſe, we are to endeavour after an inward Tranquility of Mind, and the keeping of a good Conſcience; which is always attended with Cheerfulneſs and Peace. Now the God of Love and Peace be with us all in *Chriſt Jeſus. To whom*, &c.

SERMON XV.

MAT. V. 10.

Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake: *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

V. 11. *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake,*

V. 12. *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: for great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

The firſt Sermon on this Text.

IN theſe Words our Saviour pronounces his laſt Beatitude to thoſe who are duly Paſſive or Patient, when they are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake; aſſuring us that this is the Character of the Members of his Kingdom. He

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inſiſts likewiſe on the Application of this Beatitude to his then Diſciples, foretelling that Perſecution for his ſake ſhould be their Lot, directing them in it, and comforting them under it, from the Example of the Prophets which went before them.

This Beatitude was moſt proper to come laſt, and to crown all the reſt, being indeed the moſt difficult and the moſt perfect of all, and what was abſolutely neceſſary towards the Preſervation of all the reſt: It would have been in vain to have taught them the other Chriſtian Virtues contained in the other Beatitudes, if he had not taught them likewiſe how to preſerve them, by adhering to the Profeſſion and Practice of what they had learned, notwithſtanding the ill Uſage they were to meet with from the World on Account of it.

In this likewiſe, as much as in any of the former, our Saviour meets with one of the moſt rooted Prejudices and bad Diſpoſitions as to the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom. For the *Jews* dreamt of no other than of a Fighting, Conquering, and Triumphing *Meſſiah*; and had not the leaſt Notion of the Croſs, or of his Diſciples and Followers ſuffering with him, or for him. And therefore it was highly neceſſary to teach them this Doctrine, that they might not be ſurprized and fall off, when they ſhould come to be aſſaulted with Sufferings for Chriſt and their Duty.

But

But as this was one of the hardeſt Leſſons our Saviour had to teach his Diſciples, and as they were the moſt unprepared for it, it is very obſervable how he ſugars this bitter Pill, which was to convey ſo wholeſome, but ſo unpleaſant a Medicine, delivering it attended with ſuch particular great Promiſes, and recommended with ſuch Encomiums, as might pre-engage their Eſteem and Affection for this Virtue, as giving them a Rank amongſt the moſt Honourable Company upon Earth, that of *the Prophets*, and entitling them to the higheſt Place in the Favour of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the Words, we may obſerve theſe three Heads of Diſcourſe, which I intend particularly to conſider, as they lie in Order.

I. A Bleſſing pronounced in general to all that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake; for that theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. *Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

II. A plain Inſinuation and Prediction that the State of Perſecution for Chriſt's ſake ſhould be the Lot of theſe his Diſciples and Followers. *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.*

III. Our Saviour's Directions to a patient and cheerful Deportment in ſuch perſecuted Circumſtances, and the great Comforts he ſuggeſts under them. *Rejoyce and be exceeding glad: for great is your Reward in Heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

Firſt, We have here a Bleſſing pronounced in general to all that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake. *Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*: In which Words there are *Three* Things proper to be conſider'd.

1. What is the Meaning of the Virtue here deſcribed, *The being perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake?*

2. What is the Meaning of the Reward annexed, that *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven?*

3. What Relation this Virtue has to this Reward; *viz.* How Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake, both qualifies us for, and entitles us to the Kingdom of Heaven?

I. Let us conſider what is the Meaning of the Virtue here deſcribed, The *being perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake.* And this I ſhall again comprehend in theſe *Three.*

1. The Honeſty of the Cauſe, *For Righteouſneſs ſake*; that is, for doing of their Duty.

2. Their

2. Their *Firmneſs* and *Reſoluteneſs* in this good way; that Perſecution doth not terrify them from it.

3. Their *Patience*; that being the only Weapon they make uſe of, and not *Reſiſtance*, to entitle them to this Perfection and Reward of Martyrdom.

I. *Firſt*; If we would know what belongs to the Virtue here recommended, I mean the Virtue of Martyrdom, we muſt be ſure that we ſuffer *for a good Cauſe, and the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience*; that is what our Saviour means by *Righteouſneſs ſake*. Our Suffering muſt be *for doing our Duty*. No body fancies that Suffering for notorious Crimes falls under this Denomination; yet it happens ſometimes that, in Caſe of an erroneous deluded Conſcience, many real Crimes are committed, as our Saviour foretold that the Time would come when by killing his Diſciples Men ſhould believe they did God Service. No doubt St. *Paul*, when, acted by a falſe Zeal, he violently perſecuted the Chriſtians, thought he did right to ſtop a growing Hereſy, and to maintain the Honour of the Law of *Moſes*, and of that particular Sect of the Phariſees among whom he was bred; tho' when he came afterwards to be better inſtructed, he himſelf gave this his falſe Zeal no better Names than thoſe of Blaſphemy, Injuriouſneſs, and Perſecution. And if thoſe Forty Men and

upwards, mentioned *Acts* xxiii. 12. who bound themſelves with a Curſe that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed *Paul*, had accompliſh'd their Deſign, and had ſuffer'd for it, their blind Zeal and the Erroneouſneſs of their Conſciences, tho' ſtrengthen'd with an Oath and Covenant, could never have made this in them a *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake*. How far God may pardon an ignorant blind Zeal, is to us unknown. But it is very unreaſonable to think he will reward it, far leſs with that higheſt Reward in Glory which is immediately promis'd here to Martyrs. Two Things then, as far as I can perceive, are requir'd as to this Point of the Cauſe for which we are to ſuffer, namely, that it be a worthy Good Cauſe in it ſelf, and that our Suffering be likewiſe ſincere, with a pure Eye to God, and not govern'd or chiefly influenc'd with other carnal Ends and Regards; ſuch as Pride and Vanity, Faction and Party, or Indiſcreet Zeal in drawing the Sufferings upon our ſelves by other Provocations. In ſhort then, we are neither entitled to this Beatitude when we have a wrong Cauſe, tho' we mean well, and have a Good, but an Erroneous Conſcience; nor when we have a Good Cauſe, but not a Good Conſcience towards God, nor carry our ſelves Dutifully and Peaceably towards Men. The moſt uſual good Cauſes, for which we may venture to ſuffer, and if our Intentions

tentions are right, may promiſe our ſelves that our Sufferings will be approved and accepted by God, are theſe three. 1. As to our Faith, when we ſuffer for Owning, Profeſſing, and Adhering to the Chriſtian Religion, or any Fundamental Article thereof. 2. As to our Practice, when we ſuffer for doing any thing expreſly Commanded by God, or for refuſing to do any thing expreſly Prohibited by him. 3. When we ſuffer for not admitting Doubtful or Erroneous Opinions as Doctrines of the Chriſtian Faith. The firſt of theſe indeed is but ſeldom now the Occaſion of Perſecution, as it generally was of old, before we had ſo many Chriſtian Kingdoms and Common-wealths; at leaſt the Sufferings of Chriſtians as ſuch are ſeldom to Blood; it is more the ſtrict Practice, than the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, which is now perſecuted; and the Perſecutors, inſtead of profeſs'd Pagans, are mere Nominal Chriſtians, who are little better; and inſtead of a Perſecution to Blood, it is only a Perſecution which reaches their Good Name, or outward Eſtates and Preferments. The *ſecond* ſort of Perſecution is more common, I mean that which is for doing Chriſtian Duties, or for not doing ſomething prohibited by God. Thus of old *John the Baptiſt* was a Martyr for Reprehending *Herod* for his inceſtuous Marriage. And of later Years, how many have undergone ſharp Perſecutions for uſing a Bible in

the Vulgar Tongue, or for not adoring a Conſecrated Wafer, and for diverſe other Points of pretended Duty or Worſhip? The *third* ſort too is too common a Ground of Perſecution, when we are perſecuted for not admitting Erroneous or Doubtful Opinions as Articles of Faith; for the ſame Fidelity to Chriſt, which makes us ſtedfaſt in the Profeſſion or Practice of known Truths and Duties, ſhould likewiſe guard us againſt any Additional Doctrines of Chriſtianity more than have been deliver'd us by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. For, as it is fully as great a Crime to counterfeit a King's Seal, to give Authority to pretended Inſtructions, which never came from him, as it is to diſobey thoſe which come ſtamped with Royal Authority; ſo it is as great a Crime to admit the Inventions of Men as Doctrines of Chriſtianity, as it is to deny our Aſſent or Obedience to ſuch Doctrines or Rules of Life, as were undoubtedly deliver'd by Chriſt. Not but that ſeveral indifferent Things may be admitted as Matters of Decency and Expediency, yet not as Doctrines of Chriſtianity, for Aſſertion of which he would have us expoſe our ſelves to Suffering; ſo far from it, that it is a moſt juſtifiable Cauſe of Suffering rather to undergo it, than to admit of the Inventions of Men to be impos'd upon us as Chriſtian Doctrines. So much for the Goodneſs of the Cauſe, which is the Principal Ingredient

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in this Virtue, that the Suffering be for *Righteouſneſs ſake.*

II. The *Second* Thing to be conſider'd in this Virtue, is the *Firmneſs* and *Reſolution of Mind* in adhering to this righteous Cauſe, and in not being terrified from it by the bittereſt and ſharpeſt Perſecution. This is a very great and moſt difficult piece of Virtue, when to the Difficulties in the Nature of the Virtue it ſelf, there is an Addition of other External Difficulties, enough to diſtract the Minds, and to overcome the Courage and Patience of any Men who have but common Reſolution. There is nothing but a Superiour Fear of God which can overcome this Fear of Man; and the Pains of Perſecution being both ſharp and preſent, it muſt require a very firm Belief of the Abſent Promiſes, to bear up againſt the Terrours, and Pains, and lingering Torments of Perſecution. It is certain then that the Meaning of Pronouncing a Bleſſing to them who are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake, is ſo to be underſtood, provided they continue ſtedfaſt in their righteous Profeſſion and Practice, notwithſtanding all ſuch ill Uſage and Perſecution.

III. *Thirdly*; To entitle one to that high Pitch of Virtue call'd *Martyrdom*, it is neceſſary, that beſides a good Cauſe, and a good Courage and Reſolution to adhere to it, we be purely *Paſſive* under the Perſecution. I mean, that

that we do not fly to the Arms of Reſiſtance; For if we do, whatever the Cauſe is, we can't, I think, be entitled to Martyrdom, when we are only worſted, as being inferiour in Strength; but when we ſuffer patiently and cheerfully in a good Cauſe, and do not endeavour to repel Force with Force, this is the true Suffering of Martyrs. To conclude then the Deſcription of this Virtue; It is ſuch a prevalent Love to God, or to our Duty for his ſake, that no Hardſhip ſhall beat us from the Practice of our Duty; but that we chooſe rather patiently to ſuffer than ſin. This is the Notion of this Virtue in general; but we may come to a more diſtinct Knowledge of it, by conſidering more particularly the particular Acts and Expreſſions of it, the Chief of which are theſe following.

1. In Order to this Patience and Conſtancy under Perſecution, there ſhould be a Deliberate Forecaſting in our Minds of all the Hazards attending every Duty in particular, and our Chriſtian Profeſſion in general. We ſhould ſit down and count what the Coſt will amount to of this Spiritual Building we are going about; to what Loſſes, Afflictions, and Croſſes, it will probably expoſe us, in carrying it on to Perfection. This is a Doctrine very much inculcated by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, and abſolutely neceſſary indeed towards rencountring ſo great Difficulties as every good Chriſtian has,

or

or may have to ſtruggle with. And in this ſerious Deliberation and Reſolution, we ſhould take a View not only of the common Troubles, which attend the Profeſſion and Practice of Chriſtianity, ſuch as flow from the Practices and Combinations of Men poſſeſs'd with a wicked, worldly or carnal Spirit, who in all Times are Enemies to ſerious Piety; but we ſhould likewiſe forecaſt in our Minds, how poſſible it is that, ſome time or other, Atheiſm or Hereſy may get into the Throne; and that either the Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Powers may be Encouragers of Vice or Error, and declar'd Enemies to Virtue and Truth; nay, how poſſible it is that ſuch a Zeal for Error or Idolatry may prevail, that Men will think they do God good Service by raiſing bloody Perſecutions againſt the True Church, which they think the Heretical one: Nay further, we ſhould bring the matter yet more Home to our ſelves; and every one ask himſelf the Queſtion, If I muſt either renounce Chriſtianity in general, or ſome conſiderable Truth or Duty of it in particular, or endure the Loſs of all Places and Preferments, the Forfeiture of my Eſtate, the Baniſhment, Impriſonment, Famiſhing, Torturing, or Death of my Perſon; which ſhould I chooſe? Could I be faithful to the Death, that I might obtain a Crown of Life?

2. To this Deliberation of the Mind counting the Coſt, it is neceſſary there be added, eſpe-

eſpecially in Times of Danger, an Expectation of Sufferings, and a ſteady Reſolution to bear them patiently and cheerfully when they come, in Hope of a glorious Immortality. We have a noble Example of this in the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, *Acts* xx. 22, 23, 24. *And now behold*, ſays he, *I go bound in the Spirit to* Jeruſalem, *not knowing the Things that ſhall befal me there: ſave that the Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in every City, ſaying that Bonds and Afflictions abide me. But none of theſe Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my Courſe with Joy.* This is the Taking up of the Croſs, and the Embracing of it *Deliberatione Animi*, with a deliberate Purpoſe and Reſolution of Heart; which, no doubt, whether ever ſuch Sufferings befal us or not, will be accepted by God, who judges of Men by the Heart, and not by the Caſual Events of Life.

3. To this Virtue of patient Bearing of Perſecution, there muſt concur a great Degree of Faith in God's good Providence, which overrules all the ſinful Wills of Men, and ſanctifies to his true Servants what the World deſigns for their Plague and Miſery, ſo as to make it exceeding uſeful and wholſome to their Souls. Ungodly Men look no further in their Troubles than to the immediate Inſtruments of them; and againſt them they vent their Rage; like the Dog who flies at the Stone which is thrown at

at him, without minding the Hand that threw it: But a true Believer takes all as out of the Hand of God, without regarding much the inferior Inſtruments of his Sufferings. Thus *David*, when curſed by *Shimei*, *So let him curſe*, ſays he, *for the Lord hath ſaid to him*, *Curſe* David, 2 *Sam.* xvi. 10. And thus our bleſſed Saviour, at the Approach of his Paſſion, in which there were many wicked Inſtruments, over-looking all them, looked up to his Father in Heaven, ſaying, *The Cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?* John xviii. 11.

4. One noble Ingredient in this Duty of Patient Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake, which comes in to animate and hearten them to undergo the Difficulties of it, is the having an Eye to thoſe gallant Troops in which they ſerve; I mean, the Conſideration of that noble Army of Martyrs, which have moſt patiently ſuffered ſuch great Things for the Teſtimony of a Good Conſcience; and eſpecially the looking at our Bleſſed Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* at the Head of them, who gave us ſuch a noble Example of Suffering. I find theſe two joined together in an Exhortation to Patience, *Heb.* xii. 1. where, after a great Catalogue of Martyrs and Confeſſors reckon'd up in the foregoing Chapter, the Apoſtle exhorts thus in the Beginning of that twelfth Chapter: *Wherefore ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a Cloud of Martyrs, let us lay aſide*

aſide every Weight, and the Sin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with Patience the Race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus, *the Author and Finiſher of our Faith; who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and is ſet down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God. For conſider him that endured ſuch Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be weary and faint in your Minds.*

5. All this muſt be follow'd with a firm Reſolution, by the Help of God, to follow our Duty and Conſcience, be the Hazard what it will. The greateſt Danger we are in from Sufferings, is from the ſudden Surprize of them; but a ſteady Reſolution, formed upon a full Proſpect of the Danger, can, with the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace, do great Matters. It is in vain that we contemplate the Examples of Chriſt and the Apoſtles and Martyrs, if we are not excited thereby to fortify our ſelves to the ſame Patience and Reſolution with them, as far at leaſt as our lower Talents and Degrees of Grace will admit. And therefore let us be exhorted in the Words of St. *Peter*, 1 Pet. iv. 1. *Foraſmuch as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the Fleſh, arm your ſelves likewiſe with the ſame Mind.* And in the Words of St. *Paul*, Heb. vi. 12. *That ye be not ſlothful, but Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* And *Eph.* vi. 10. *Finally my Brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the*

Power

Power of his Might. Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil.—— *Take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil Day, and having done all to ſtand.* Nor muſt we count it enough to form theſe Reſolutions once; we ſhould frequently renew them; eſpecially as there is either a freſh Proſpect of Danger, or a Senſe of our own Lapſes and Infirmities: for both which we have the Example of St. *Peter*; firſt upon the Proſpect of Danger: 1 *Pet.* iv. 12. *Beloved*, ſays he, *think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery Tryal which is to try you, as tho' ſome ſtrange Thing happened to you; but rejoyce in as much as ye are Partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings; that when his Glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding Joy.* Then as to a Senſe of his Failings and Infirmities, we have him upon his Denial of his Maſter, *going out and weeping bitterly*, *Mat.* xxvi. 75. and renewing himſelf by Repentance.

6. To a Strength of Reſolution in a right Chriſtian Martyr is joyn'd an Humble Senſe of the Feebleneſs of all our own Endeavours without the Aſſiſtance, the extraordinary Aſſiſtance of the Grace of God. And therefore from this Senſe he is moſt Aſſiduous and Importunate at the Throne of Grace, for Grace to help in that time of need. Thus we find the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, *Eph.* vi. 18. after he had animated the Chriſtian with

with Courage, that he ſhould be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might; and had likewiſe armed him from Head to Foot with the whole Armour of God, concludes with the Neceſſity of Prayer; both our own Prayers for our ſelves, and our mutual Prayers for one another; and our Perſeverance and Continuance therein, that we may reſolutely hold out to the End. *Praying always*, ſays he, *with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perſeverance, and Supplication for all Saints.*

7. I ſhall add but one Thing more in the Deſcription of this Duty of Patience under Perſecution, namely, that we ſhould train our ſelves to it, by accuſtoming our ſelves to all Acts of Self-denial, and Bearing of the Croſs in time of our outward Peace and Quiet, that ſo in the Day of Perſecution we may be found like well trained Soldiers, who are not to ſeek, but underſtand all the Points of their Exerciſe and Diſcipline. So St. *Paul* tells us of himſelf, that as they who ſtrove for Victory in the Olympick Games, kept a good Government of themſelves, and trained themſelves to long Wind and Hardſhip; ſo he kept under his Body, and brought it into Subjection to the Spirit, leſt his Life ſhould contradict his Doctrine, to the endangering of his own Salvation. *Every Man that ſtriveth for the Maſtery*, ſays he, *is temperate in all Things: Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown,*

Crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly: So fight I, not as one that beateth the Air: but I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection: leſt that by any means when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a Caſt-away, 1 Cor. ix. 25, *&c.* There is nothing more neceſſary for us than that we ſhould thus learn to bear the Daily Croſſes which befal us, while we do our Duty. So ſays our Saviour, *Luke* ix. 23. *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs daily, and follow me.* He that indulges himſelf ſo much, that he can't bear the ſmalleſt Injury or Affront, and is out of Patience at every the leaſt Diſappointment, and knows not what it is to refuſe a Temptation to Pleaſure, tho' at the Expence of his Duty and Conſcience; he that rather than be out of the Faſhion, or bear a little Shame of lewd profane Company, will run into any manner of Extravagance, and ſacrifice every thing that ought to be deareſt to an Honeſt and Good Man; he that in theſe little Things will undergo no Shame or Trouble for Chriſt; how will he do, if he ſhould be called forth to loſe all, Eſtate, and Friends, and Life it ſelf, for his Duty, which was often the Caſe of the Primitive Chriſtians?

Thus far I have given you a Deſcription of the Duty of *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake*; in which I have not tyed up my ſelf to thoſe Things

that are eſſential to the Duty, but have taken the Liberty to put in ſuch Actions as are the uſual Adjuncts and Concomitants of it, that ye may underſtand and learn it the better. Time will not allow our Conſidering of the Reward annexed, nor the Relation of the one to the other; which I muſt therefore refer to another Opportunity.

I pray God to bleſs what we have heard, and to give us a right Underſtanding in all Things, through *Jeſus Chriſt* our bleſſed Mediator and Redeemer. To whom, *&c.*



SER

SERMON XVI.

MAT. V. 10.

Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake: For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

The ſecond Sermon on this Text.

IN a former Diſcourſe on theſe Words, there were three Things I propos'd to be conſider'd from them.

I. The Virtue here recommended, *the being perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake.*

II. The Reward annexed, *The Kingdom of Heaven.*

III. The Relation between this Virtue and this Reward; or how Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake both qualifies us for, and entitles us to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Having at that Time conſider'd the firſt of theſe, the Virtue here recommended, I proceed now to the other two, the Reward annexed, and the Relation the Virtue has to the Reward.

II. The Reward annexed is, *The Kingdom of Heaven*; by which Expreſſion is commonly meant, in the *New Teſtament*, the Goſpel State, or the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, with all the Privileges of Grace and Glory annex'd. And I ſee not why this common Acceptation will not ſuit well in this Place. And it ſignifies that they who patiently ſuffer in a good Cauſe, and for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, are κατ' ἐξοχην, in a moſt eminent manner the Genuine Diſciples of Chriſt, and ſhall be admitted to an High Degree of Glory. By this Expreſſion, *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, there are theſe three Truths intimated. 1. That *Perſecution* will be the Lot of the Diſciples of the *Meſſiah*. 2. That in this perſecuted State, the Graces of the Goſpel ſhall appear in them very eminently conſpicuous. 3. That they ſhall be advanc'd to an high Degree of Glory in Heaven.

1. I

1. It is intimated, that Perſecution will be the Lot of the Diſciples of the *Meſſiah*: For by ſaying that the *Kingdom of Heaven*, or the *Kingdom of the Meſſiah*, *is theirs*, this muſt needs imply ſo much. There wants nothing to make out this, except to obſerve, that it is all one Thing in the Goſpels, to ſay the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and the *Kingdom of Chriſt*, or the *Meſſiah*, and the *Kingdom of God*. Theſe Phraſes, I ſay, are us'd promiſcuouſly; and one of the firſt Leſſons we are taught by this Expreſſion in the Text is, that the Goſpel State will not be, as they fancy'd, a State of Worldly Proſperity, but a State of Perſecution; and that they who patiently and cheerfully undergo it, have a good Title, and are well qualify'd for the Heavenly Felicity.

2. It is intimated, that under this State of the Croſs, all Goſpel Graces ſhall appear very eminent and conſpicuous, which follows upon the entitling ſuch Perſons to an Eminent Station both in the Kingdom of Grace and Glory.

3. It is intimated, that proportionably to their Degree of Patient Suffering, ſo ſhall be the Degree of Glory to which they ſhall be advanc'd; for it is ſaid with a peculiar Emphaſis, that *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; *q. d.* They of all Men have a peculiar Right and Title to it. But becauſe theſe Things are more plainly expreſs'd in the following Parts of our Saviour's Application of this Beatitude, whereas they are

contain'd here more by Implication, I ſhall delay the Conſideration of them till we come to that Application. In the mean Time I go on to,

III. The *Third* Thing I obſerv'd in the Words; namely, The Relation this Virtue has to this Reward. And this, I think, will require the ſhewing theſe two Things.

1. That Patient Suffering for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, is a true Character and proper Qualification of a Genuine Diſciple of Chriſt's here on Earth.

2. That it entitles and qualifies him for everlaſting Glory and Happineſs in Heaven.

1. That Patient Suffering for *Righteouſneſs ſake* is a true Character and proper Qualification of a Genuine Diſciple of Chriſt here on Earth. And here now, that I may ſhew how near this Spirit of Suffering approaches to the very Heart of the Chriſtian Religion, I ſhall firſt inſtance in ſome Virtues appertaining to it, or rather concurring in the Compoſition of it, on Account of which, it deſerves the Higheſt Regard; then I ſhall conſider what Bleſſed Conſequences it is attended with.

I begin with the Virtues concurring in the Compoſition of it; of which,

(1.) The *Firſt* I ſhall name, is Faith unfeigned; of which this patient, reſolute Suffering is a good Evidence. Faith being a Belief of, and Regard to the Promiſes of God, eſpecially ſuch of

of them as have not their Acccompliſhment in this Life, is that Grace and Virtue, which doth chiefly fortify Chriſt's Martyrs in all their Sufferings. It is this ſteady Looking at the Joy ſet before us, and at *Jeſus*, who has thoſe Rewards in his Hands, that enables us to endure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the Shame. We find it all along aſcribed to Faith, in that long Catalogue of Confeſſors and Martyrs, which we have *Heb.* xi. that Afflictions, with the People of God, were preferr'd to the Pleaſures of Sin; and that the Ancient Martyrs *had Tryals of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, of Bonds and Impriſonment; that they were ſtoned, were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the Sword; that they wandred about in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented.* All is aſcribed to *Faith.* It was their having an Eye to the Recompence of Reward, which is the Act of Faith, that enabled them to undergo ſuch great Sufferings for *Righteouſneſs ſake.*

(2.) A *Second* great Chriſtian Virtue, which enters into the Deſcription of Martyrdom, and all the leſſer Sufferings for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, is Patience, which quickly breaks us of that Softneſs and Effeminacy, which is ſo great an Enemy to Virtue, and makes us expert and hardy Soldiers of *Jeſus Chriſt* in this ſpiritual Warfare. A Thing abſolutely neceſſary in a Chriſtian Life; for the Miſeries and Calamities of Life

in general, more particularly thoſe of a good Chriſtian in a wicked World, are ſo many, that if we do not learn in Patience to poſſeſs our Souls, and by Faith to look at the World to come, we ſhall be of all Men the moſt miſerable. Now Patience can never be ſo well learn'd as by Actual Suffering. All the Speculative and Abſtracted Precepts that can be given, will never teach it ſo well. As no Exerciſes of Military Diſcipline in Time of Peace will make ſo good, at leaſt ſo hardy a Soldier, as the actual enduring the Hardſhips of War; ſo Patience is not to be learn'd near ſo well in Time of Proſperity, as in Time of Perſecution.

(3.) A *Third* great Duty, moſt eſſential to this Virtue of Suffering for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, is the Weaning of our Heart from the World; which is not more effectually attained by any Thing than by Perſecution. This is a Virtue, for which the firſt and beſt Chriſtians were very exemplary; and it had a noble Influence upon their Lives, not only in keeping them from all Diſhoneſty in their Dealings, but in Opening their Hearts to an admirable Degree of Charity and Brotherly Love, which it is hard to tell whether it was a greater Ornament or Benefit of their Profeſſion, and one of the greateſt Comforts in all their Troubles: For they who ſpar'd not their own Perſons and Lives, far leſs valu'd their Eſtates; but

but freely contributed them for the Common Service, and the Support of their Chriſtian Brethren.

(4.) *Fourthly*; The World being thus overcome, this makes Way for a greater Duty, and yet nearer, if poſſible, to the Heart of Chriſtianity, namely, Self-denial; for there is no greater Ingredient in this Virtue of Suffering for *Righteouſneſs ſake* than it is. And this is ſo Fundamental a Virtue, that without it none can be Chriſt's Diſciple, as he tells us himſelf, *Mat.* xvi. 24. *If any Man will come after me, let him him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me*: And not only deny his own Humour, Pleaſure and Profit, but be ready to ſacrifice his Life it ſelf for Chriſt, as being the ſureſt Way to obtain eternal Life, as it there follows. *For whoſoever will ſave his Life, ſhall loſe it; and whoſoever will loſe his Life for my ſake, ſhall find it.*

(5.) A *Fifth* Noble Ingredient in this Duty of Suffering for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, is the Love of God and Chriſt. As there can be no greater Demonſtration of Love and Friendſhip than our laying down our Life for our Friend, here is an Inſtance of a Love that is ſtronger than Death, when we can freely part with our Lives rather than betray our Duty. What a mighty Comfort muſt it be to them who ſuffer for Chriſt, that they know, by Experience, that nothing is able to ſeparate them from his Love. See what

a Torrent of ſpiritual Joy St. *Paul* breaks out into upon this Conſideration, that his, and other good Chriſtians, their Love of Chriſt was greater than that it could be overcome by all the Hardſhips of the World. *Rom.* viii. 35. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of Chriſt? Shall Tribulation, or Diſtreſs, or Perſecution, or Famine, or Nakedneſs, or Peril, or Sword? (As it is written, for thy ſake we are killed all the Day long; we are accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter;) nay, in all theſe Things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us.*

(6.) Chriſtian Courage and Fortitude is inſeparably annex'd to this Duty of Patient *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake.* Our Lord's Apoſtles, when unacquainted with Sufferings, were very Timerous, and apt to flee upon every remote Proſpect of them; but when they came to be us'd and train'd to Daily Tryals, they grew Bold and Hardy, and ſuffer'd not only with Patience and Courage, but with Joy and Alacrity. It is ſaid of them, that *They came away from the Council, rejoycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for the Name of Chriſt,* Acts v. 41. To uſe the Apoſtle's Phraſe, *They grew ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might,* Eph. vi. 10. They grew expert at the Uſe of all ſpiritual Weapons, *the whole Armour of God,* by the Uſe of which they learn'd to withſtand the Temptations of the Devil, the World, and the

the Fleſh, *and having done all, to ſtand.* They came to be like a Brave Victorious Army, which enters upon the Battle with great Aſſurance of Succeſs; and therefore never once thinks of flying or yielding.

(7.) *Laſtly*; This Virtue of *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake*, is join'd with another Virtue, which crowns all the reſt, I mean, Conſtancy and Perſeverance to the End. For it is Patience, and Patience only, which will hold out to the End of our Chriſtian Courſe; as the Apoſtle obſerves well of the Martyrs of the *Old Teſtament*; Heb. xii. 1. *Wherefore ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a Cloud of Martyrs, let us lay aſide every Weight, and the Sin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with Patience the Race that is ſet before us.* As this Patience is the chief Virtue requiſite towards Perſeverance, ſo Wearineſs and Impatience (which is directly contrary to *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake*) is the moſt like to expoſe us to final Apoſtacy and Miſcarrying; as the ſame Apoſtle obſerves at the third Verſe of the forecited Chapter: *For conſider him*, ſays he, *that endured ſuch Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in your Minds*, Heb. xii. 3.

Thus now we ſee how *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake* entitles a Man to *The Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, to be a true Member of the Church Militant here upon Earth; and that from the great

great Chriſtian Virtues concurring in the Compoſition of it. For what better Characters would we have of a good Chriſtian than Faith and Patience, a Mind diſengaged from the World, Self-denial, the Love of God and Chriſt, Chriſtian Courage and Fortitude, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance? All which are inſeparable from this Virtue of *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake.*

2. But then, *Secondly*, we ſhall be further convinc'd of this Truth, if we will conſider likewiſe the bleſſed Fruits, which uſually flow from this Virtue, whereby it promotes the Kingdom of Chriſt, or the Power of the Goſpel, both in our ſelves and others. I ſhall inſtance likewiſe in ſome of the Chief of them; which is the beſt Way I can think of to make us ſenſible of this Great Truth: And *Firſt*, what Effects it has upon our ſelves; *Then* what upon others.

(1.) *Firſt* then as to our ſelves; it commonly proves and tries our Sincerity, ſhewing us both the Truth, and the Meaſure, and Degree of our other Chriſtian Graces. *Firſt*, The Truth of them, which indeed cannot eaſily be diſcerned without a Storm of Perſecution. The Wiſe Builder, and the Strength of his Building, how are they prov'd? Our Lord tells us, *Matt.* vii. 25. *The Rain deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that Houſe; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a Rock.* And on the other

other hand, the Fooliſh Builder, and the Slightneſs of his Foundation, how are they detected? The very ſame Way; '*The Rain deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon the Houſe*, which had been built upon the Sand, *and it fell, and Great was the Fall of it.* So that we owe this to the Storm of Perſecution; it tries our Building in Religion, and diſcovers which has, and which has not a ſound Foundation. This is a very great Help towards our Firmneſs and Sincerity in the Chriſtian Profeſſion. For in the Day of Tryal it will be found that there are many Fair Weather Chriſtians; many who will ſtick by Chriſt in a Time of Peace and Proſperity; who, if they were to ſuffer for him, would preſently abandon and forſake him. *Secondly*, This will try the Meaſure and Degree, as well as the Truth and Sincerity of our Chriſtian Virtues. For many weak Chriſtians ſtagger, and are ready to fall off in Perſecution, eſpecially upon the firſt Surprizes of it, who yet, through the Grace of God, take Heart again, and cheerfully undergo the Combat. Our Lord's Diſciples, when he was apprehended, fled, and had not the Courage to own him; tho' afterwards they recover'd themſelves, or rather, were recover'd by the Grace of God to a Firmneſs and Conſtancy in the Faith. It is by theſe Waverings and Fluctuations of Mind, theſe Fears and Staggerings in the Day of

of Perſecution, that we may judge of our Weakneſs; for as the Wiſe Man obſerves, *Prov.* xxiv. 10. *If thou faint in the Day of Adverſity, thy Strength is ſmall.*

(2.) As *Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake* helps to diſcover our Weakneſs, ſo it contributes very much towards the Encreaſing our Humility. It is obſervable that St. *Peter*, who, before his Temptation and Danger in the High Prieſt's Hall, and his Sin of Denying his Maſter, was full of Self-Confidence, aſſerting, that *tho' all the reſt ſhould deny him, he never would*; it is obſervable, I ſay, that after this Tryal and Fall, he had much more Modeſt and Humble Thoughts of himſelf; for when his Maſter asked him, *John* xxi. 15. *Loveſt thou me more than theſe?* All his Anſwer was, that he loved him; and upon the ſame Queſtion repeated a ſecond and third Time, that *He knew that he loved him*; but not a Word of preferring himſelf to the reſt, as before; he had now learn'd more Humility. And a very bleſſed Thing it is, when Perſecution, and the Obſervation of our own Weakneſs and Lapſes, brings us to this good Temper, as generally all good People it doth.

(3.) A *Third* excellent Effect of a Patient enduring *Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake*, is, that it purges us from our Droſs, that is, from our Corruptions, and brightens our Virtues, making them much more refined and purified than they were

were before. Thus God, in his Judgments, is well compared by the Prophet *Malachi*, to a Refiner and Purifier of Silver, *Mal.* iii. 2, 3. *But who may abide the Day of his Coming? And who ſhall ſtand when he appeareth? For he is like a Refiner's Fire, and like Fuller's Soap: and he ſhall ſit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver; and he ſhall purify the Sons of* Levi, *and purge them as Gold and Silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an Offering in Righteouſneſs.* A Time of *Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake*, and the perfect Work of Patience under it, is commonly an excellent Seaſon for all Graces, and a Time of Refining and Purifying us from all our Droſs and Alloy, and of making us Bright like Silver tryed in a Furnace, *purified ſeven Times*, according to the *Pſalmiſt's* Expreſſion.

(4.) The Virtue of *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake*, is commonly attended with great Prayer and Devotion, both the Prayers of the Perſecuted, and of their Chriſtian Brethren in their Behalf. Thus it is obſerved of *Paul* and *Silas*, while Priſoners at *Philippi*, that *At Midnight they prayed and ſang Praiſes unto God*, Acts xvi. 25. And *Acts* xii. 5. it is obſerv'd, that when *Peter* was impriſon'd by *Herod*, *Prayer was made without ceaſing of the Church unto God for him.* And the Church gains more by drawing near to God, than ſhe loſes by the Perſecutions of Men. The Tribulation ſhe meets with from the World,

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is more than compenſated by the Peace ſhe has in Chriſt. *In the World ye ſhall have Trouble*, as our Saviour has foretold, *but in him we ſhall have Peace*, Joh. xvi. 33.

(5.) *Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake* is commonly attended with great Love of the Perſecuted one to another; and all the Exerciſes of the moſt endearing Friendſhip, which is full of Comfort and Happineſs. *Then they that fear the Lord, ſpeak often one to another*; Mal. iii. 16. Then there is a great Communication of Counſels, Hearts, Prayers, Purſes, and Eſtates; then, if ever, is a full Exerciſe of Chriſtian Friendſhip and Brotherly Love, to the great Comfort of the Perſecuted, and the Confuſion of their Perſecutors.

Upon others likewiſe, it has moſt excellent Effects, in awakening the Sleepy and Secure World to a Conſideration of thoſe Things, for which they ſee thoſe that fear God ſtoutly endure the greateſt Perſecution. They who at other Times are of *Gallio*'s Temper, and care for none of thoſe Things, then begin naturally to have their Curioſity awaken'd; and the very Obſervation, how ſeriouſly ſome believe the great Matters of Religion, and how reſolutely they venture their All upon it, and how patiently they ſuffer, is apt to make great Impreſſions; ſo that the Spectators themſelves go away convinced; like the Centurion who waited on our Saviour

Saviour at his Croſs, when he ſaw all that was done, he was ſtruck, and confeſſed, *Truly this was the Son of God.* However it comes about, it is a conſtant Obſervation concerning this ſort of *Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake*, that the Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church.

From all which it is evident, what Relation the being *Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake* has to the *Kingdom of Heaven*; if by that Kingdom we underſtand the Church Militant here upon Earth; for no People have a better Title to be Genuine Members of Chriſt's Kingdom than they: For this Virtue, we ſee, includes all other that are moſt eſſential to the Chriſtian Religion, both in its Nature and Conſequences.

2. They who are *Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, have likewiſe as good a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven in Glory. This neceſſarily follows from the other; for they who are good Members of the Church Militant, are ſure to be Members likewiſe of the Church Triumphant. But we need not go to make out this their Title by Conſequences. We ſhall hear from the following Part of this Text, how it is directly promis'd them; *For great ſhall be their Reward in Heaven.* However, I ſhall forbear treating of it till we come to that Part of the Text; and content my ſelf at preſent to draw a few Inferences from what has been ſaid; which I

ſhall do with all convenient Brevity, and have done.

1. *Firſt* then, from hence let us learn, after our Saviour's Example, not to meaſure Things only or chiefly by the Conveniencies or Inconveniencies they cauſe to the Body, or by what they afford of outward Profit or Pleaſure in this World; but to take our Meaſures from the true Satisfaction Things yield to the Mind, and the Relation they have to our future eternal State. To have gone by the common Notions of the World, it would never have enter'd into our Hearts to have plac'd *Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake* among the Beatitudes. But our Bleſſed Lord conſider'd more what was for our Real and Eternal Good, than what was only for our Temporary Satisfaction; and ſo ſhould we. Howſoever unpleaſant it may be to Fleſh and Blood, there is certainly nothing better for our Souls; nothing that contributes more to our inward Tranquillity of Mind, or future Eternal Felicity, than the Croſs of Chriſt.

2. Is it ſo bleſſed a Thing patiently to bear *Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake?* Then let this Doctrine fortify us with Courage, the Courage of Confeſſors and Martyrs, whenever we ſhall be call'd out to Suffering for a Good Cauſe, and the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience. And, in the mean Time, let it teach us, at leaſt in Preparation of Mind, to embrace the Croſs,

and

and to reſolve rather to ſuffer than to ſin. The Church has been often under Bloody Tryals from the Perſecutions of Heathen Emperors, and *Romiſh* Croiſades and Inquiſitions. Many Popes by themſelves, and the Princes of their Communion, have drunk deep in the Blood of the Saints. And ſuch is the Uncertainty of all Human Affairs, that tho' at the preſent, Thanks be to God for it, there is a good Proſpect of external Peace to the Church, yet we know not how ſoon the Clouds may gather; therefore it is always neceſſary to take up our Croſs, and to reſolve, however the World may go, that we will adhere to Chriſt; and whenever we are called out to it, that we will cheerfully ſuffer, rather than betray our Duty to him our Great Maſter. This will help to put and keep our Minds in a ſerious Temper, and enable us to bring forth thoſe bleſſed Fruits, which I have ſhew'd to be the Genuine Conſequences of *Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake.*

3. *Laſtly*; This Doctrine may ſerve to diſcover to us the true Spirit of Chriſtianity, with relation to Perſecution; and that in theſe two Points. Perſecution is no Weapon it ever makes uſe of for Propagating any of its Doctrines. And when we are perſecuted, the Chriſtian Spirit will teach us not to return Evil for Evil; not to uſe the way of Revenge, but that of Meekneſs and Patience. Two

Points, which, if they had been thoroughly underſtood and conſider'd, would have prevented Abundance of Miſchief, which has been introduc'd by the bloody Spirit of Perſecution on the one hand, and the revengeful and rebellious Reſentment of Injuries on the other. But whatever is to be ſaid of Publick Counſels, and their Pleas of Law, Privileges, Preſervation of Liberty, Property, and Religion, let us learn, at leaſt in the Quality of private Chriſtians, to guard our Spirits againſt all Malice and Revenge. Let no Provocations be able to conquer the Charity, Meekneſs, and Patience of our Minds. Let us not be overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good. Perhaps there are ſome ſuch Implacable Tempers as will not be reclaim'd by the ways of Love and Kindneſs. But we had better leave ſuch to God; and tho' all other Endeavours ſhould fail, never ceaſe to pray for them; aſſuring our ſelves, that if we commit our Cauſe to him, to whom both Mercy and Vengeance belong, we ſhall in due Time come off with Honour. This is the *Pſalmiſt's* Advice, *Pſ.* xxxvii. 5, 6. and I ſhall conclude with it. *Commit thy Way unto the Lord: Truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs. And he ſhall bring forth thy Righteouſneſs as the Light, and thy Judgment as the Noon-day.* Now to this Great and Good God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be all Praiſe, &c.

SER-

SERMON XVII.

MAT. V. 10.

Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake: For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

V. 11. Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake,

V. 12. *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: For great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

The third Sermon on this Text.

IN theſe three Verſes, which give us an Account of the laſt Beatitude, I took Notice of three Heads of *Diſcourſe*.

I. In the tenth Verſe we have a Bleſſing pronounced in general to all that are *Perſecuted for Righ-*

Righteouſneſs ſake; with a particular Encouragement annexed, that *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

II. At the eleventh Verſe we have a tacit Prediction, that this State of Perſecution ſhould be the Lot of Chriſt's Diſciples and Followers. *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.*

III. At the twelfth Verſe, we have our Saviour's Directions to his Diſciples, as to their cheerful Deportment under theſe perſecuted Circumſtances, and his Comforts to them, with extraordinary Promiſes in ſuch a Caſe: *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad*; *for great is you Reward in Heaven*: *For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

As to the *Firſt* of theſe, the Bleſſing pronounced in general to all that are *Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, with the Encouragement annexed, that *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; I have already conſider'd it in two Diſcourſes on the tenth Verſe. I proceed now to the *Second*, contained in the eleventh Verſe, in which our Lord applies the foregoing general Doctrine of Perſecution to his Diſciples and Followers, foretelling them, (for all their ſanguine Expectations) that this ſhould be their Lot in his Service.

vice. And that they might not be offended at it, he joins his Bleſſing to it; and in the Words immediately following, comforts and directs them under it.

In the Words we may obſerve theſe Two Things.

I. A Prediction that it ſhould be the Lot of our Saviour's Diſciples, that is, of Chriſtians, to be perſecuted on Account of their Religion. *Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.*

II. Chriſt's Bleſſing upon them in ſuch a Caſe. *Bleſſed are ye*, when this ſhall be your Lot, *when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.*

I begin, *Firſt*, with our Saviour's Prediction, that it ſhould be the Lot of Chriſtians to be perſecuted for his ſake, that is, on Account of their Religion. And this being a Doctrine, no leſs ſtrange in it ſelf, that ſo innocent and uſeful a Religion ſhould meet with ſo bad Treatment in the World, than it was ſurprizing and unexpected to the Diſciples in thoſe Days; it will require ſome Pains to ſet it in a due Light. In ſpeaking to it, I ſhall obſerve the following Method.

1. I will conſider how agreeable this Doctrine is to other Paſſages of Holy Scripture.

2. I will enquire into the Grounds of it from Reaſon and Experience.

3. I will conſider how this Prediction was accompliſhed to the Primitive Chriſtians.

4. I will enquire whether and how far we are concern'd in this Doctrine, who live in the more peaceable Times of Chriſtianity?

5. I intend to draw ſome proper Inferences and Concluſions from it, in Order to Practice.

I. *Firſt*, I am to conſider how agreeable this Doctrine is to other Paſſages of Holy Scripture. There was nothing the *Jews* were more miſtaken in than in this, that they thought the *Meſſiah* and his Followers ſhould flouriſh in all manner of external Eaſe, Wealth, Pomp, and Grandeur, without any Mixture of Trouble; and there was no Notion our Saviour was at more Pains to rectify, taking all Occaſions and Opportunities to foretel the Croſs, and to fortify and prepare his Diſciples for it. Inſtead of a rich and plentiful Settlement in his Service, he told one that offer'd to follow him, that *The Foxes had Holes, and the Birds of the Air had Neſts, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his Head*, Mat. viii. 20. Inſtead of the Love of Friends and Kindred, and the reſt of the World, he told his Diſciples, that *The Brother ſhould deliver up the Brother to Death, and the Father the Child, and that they ſhould be hated of all Men for his Names ſake*, Matt. x. 21. In-

Inſtead of having a good Opinion of them for their holy Lives, or great Miracles, or excellent Doctrine, he foretold how they ſhould be traduced and calumniated, and all the vile Aſperſions thrown upon them, becauſe of their relation to him. *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter*, ſays he, *nor the Servant above his Lord. It is enough for the Diſciple that he be as his Maſter, and the Servant as his Lord: If they have called the Maſter of the Houſe* Beelzebub, *how much more ſhall they call them of his Houſhold?* Mat. x. 24. Inſtead of quiet peaceable Lives in this World, he foretold that they ſhould have Lives full of Trouble, and be worried and devoured by the reſt of Mankind. *Think not that I am come to ſend Peace on Earth: I came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword*, Mat. x. 34. And elſewhere, *Behold, I ſend you forth as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves. Be ye therefore wiſe as Serpents, and harmleſs as Doves. But beware of Men, for they will deliver you up to the Councils, and they will ſcourge you in their Synagogues. And ye ſhall be brought before Governours and Kings for my ſake, for a Teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles*, Mat. x. 16. It is needleſs to multiply more Paſſages to this Purpoſe; for every where throughout the Goſpels, our Saviour's Predictions are in the ſame ſtrain. Inſtead of inveigling and enticing his Diſciples with fair Promiſes of great Things in this World, he all along tells them freely the

worſt

worſt they were to expect; and particularly, that *If they would come after him, they muſt deny themſelves, and take up their Croſs, and follow him*, Mat. xvi. 24. And therefore it will be fit,

II. That we proceed, in the *Second* Place, to a more difficult Inquiry into the Reaſons and Grounds of this ſtrange Doctrine of the Croſs, and of our Saviour's ſo early Prediction of it; in Order to which, let us diſtinctly conſider theſe Two Things.

1. The Grounds of this, in Appearance very ſtrange Doctrine and Diſpenſation, that the Beſt Men and the Beſt Inſtitution ſhould *be perſecuted and evil ſpoken of.*

2. Why our Saviour thought it proper ſo early to foretel this, which was ſo apt in its own Nature to offend his Diſciples, and to cauſe them to fall off from him; and did not chuſe rather to conceal it, till they were well confirmed in his Service.

1. To begin with the *Firſt*; The Grounds of this ſeemingly ſtrange Diſpenſation, that the Beſt Men and the Beſt Inſtitution ſhould be perſecuted, and not rather welcomed and encouraged in the World. Now this, I think, may be accounted for in two ſeveral Reſpects; *Firſt*, As it is the natural Reſult of the ſeveral Tempers of both good and bad Men in this World. *Secondly*, As it is the wiſe Appointment of the ſuperior Providence of Almighty God,

God, for diverſe wiſe Ends and Purpoſes. I ſhall conſider it in both theſe Reſpects.

Firſt; As it is the natural Reſult of the ſeveral Tempers of both good and bad Men in this World. And in this reſpect, it is no very hard matter to account for it; for a Wolf has not a more natural Antipathy to a Lamb, than Wicked Men have to the Good: They inwardly hate and abhor them, tho', for their own Ends, they often counterfeit Kindneſs, and think not fit to declare their Hatred, except when they may do it to Advantage. And it muſt be confeſs'd, that Advantages they have a great many; for Bad Men do mightily outnumber the Good, and conſequently in all Societies are able to overtop them in Power and Strength. Particularly, if Matters come to be tranſacted either by the way of Force and Tumult, or if Votes come to be number'd, inſtead of Reaſons weigh'd, good Men are in Election to come badly off. Eſpecially if Numbers and Authority go together, then the little Flock of Good Men has much the worſt of it. An Inſtance of this we have in the Caſe of *Lot* in *Sodom*; where, when the Angels came to his Houſe, the prevailing Power and Numbers of Wicked Men ſhew'd what mad Work they would have made, if the Angels had not reſtrained them; and particularly, how they grew upon the Weakneſs of *Lot* and his Party. The

Hiſtory

Hiſtory is upon Record, *Gen.* xix. where we may ſee what Rudeneſs the Men of *Sodom* offer'd to *Lot*, upon his entertaining at his Houſe the two Angels, whom they took to be two Sojourning Men, intending to force them to the ſame abominable Lewdneſs, which was ſo ſhamefully practis'd among themſelves. *Firſt*, they beſet his Houſe, and overbore him with Numbers. *Before they lay down*, ſays the Text, *the Men of the City, even the Men of* Sodom, *compaſſed the Houſe round, both Old and Young, all the People from every Quarter.* Then they went to break open his Doors. *Stand back*, ſay they, *this one Fellow came in to ſojourn, and he will needs be a Judge.* This *one Fellow*; ſee how they deſpiſe him, as having no Party, or Intereſt. And this is the common Lot of good Men; they are no body, when over-power'd with the Numbers and Intereſt of the Wicked. Then the Contrariety of their Tempers, and Way of Life, is as great an Occaſion of Trouble to good Men. For the Example of Good Men, where it is not imitated, is commonly hated and decry'd: As St. *Peter* obſerves; *For the Time paſt of our Life may ſuffice us*, ſays he, *to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, when we walked in Laſciviouſneſs, Luſts, Exceſs of Wine, Revellings, Banquetings, and abominable Idolatries; wherein they think it ſtrange that you run not with them to the ſame Exceſs of Riot, ſpeaking evil of you*; 1 *Pet.* iv. 3, 4.

Now

Now if bare Good Example, which is the ſilenteſt and moſt inoffenſive way of Reforming Mankind, is ſo ill taken; what would it be, if the Good Man ſhould proceed further to Reproofs and Admonitions; to the ſtanding up for good Laws againſt Vice, when he happens to be a Member of the Legiſlative Body; or to put good Laws ſtrictly in Execution, if he ſhould come to be cloathed with the Power and Authority of a Magiſtrate? What if he went about to draw in others, and to make a Party and Intereſt for doing all the good he can in the Country where he lives? It is too too plain that he would quickly raiſe a great many Neſts of Waſps about him, that would not only with their Noiſe put to Silence, and drown his good Admonitions, but endeavour likewiſe to make him quit his Station with the Sharpneſs and Unmercifulneſs of their Stings; I mean, their rude and provoking Actions and Behaviour. It is true, in Countries bleſt with good Laws, and good Governours and Magiſtrates, Wicked Men dare not do as they would, and are civil more out of Fear than Choice; but ſtill the inward Temper and Inclination of their Minds is perſecuting and bloody againſt all that are uneaſy to them, either by their Authority, Admonition, or Example. And if this Perverſeneſs of Temper ſhould meet in any near relation of Life, ſuch as Magiſtrate and

and Subject, Parent or Child, Maſter or Servant, Husband or Wife, near Neighbour or Kinſman, it is then a great deal more troubleſome and intolerable.

And as the Temper and Inclination of Wicked Men prompts them to the Perſecution of others, there is often likewiſe a great Mixture of Worldly Intereſt, which drives it on. The Scribes and Phariſees, in our Saviour's Days, drove on his Death, chiefly from this Conſideration, that the World was like to forſake them, and follow him. *What do we*, ſay they, *for this Man doth many Miracles; if we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him; and the* Romans *ſhall come and take away both our Place and Nation*, Joh. xi. 47. It is plain then, they judged that their Intereſt led them, as well as their Temper and Inclination, to the Perſecution of *Jeſus*. And it has been often ſo ſince; the Promoters of Perſecution have an Eye to the Eſtates or Places of others; and contrive Penal or Sanguinary Laws, on purpoſe to catch Men of Principles and Conſcience, that they may have the Benefit of the Fines or Forfeitures of their Eſtates or Places to themſelves, or their Friends; at leaſt, that by removing them out of the way, there may be the more Buſineſs for *them*, conſequently the more Advantage and Profit coming to *them*.

But,

But, *Secondly*, I am to account likewiſe for the Perſecution of good Chriſtians, as it is the Appointment of the Providence of God, for diverſe wiſe Ends and Purpoſes. Of which,

(1.) The *Firſt* and principal is, that it is ſo very beneficial to Good Men, far beyond worldly Wealth, Eaſe, and Proſperity. The Good of the Soul, and the Promoting our eternal Welfare and Happineſs, are Ends much more worthy of God, than the gratifying our temporal Intereſt or carnal Inclinations. This being the Thing which ought to be principally minded, wherever our temporal and eternal Intereſt interfere, it is but reaſonable that the eternal one ſhould be preferred. Now it is certain that there is nothing more dangerous for Man in this corrupt State, than an uninterrupted Courſe of Proſperity; and on the other hand, nothing more Sovereignly Medicinal, than the Croſs; ſo that it is no Wonder, if God rebukes and chaſtens thoſe whom he loves. Affliction is ſo well fitted to make Men ſerious and conſiderate, to make them ſenſible of the Vanity of the World, and to wean their Hearts from it; to work in them a Senſe and Fear of God, and an Apprehenſion of his righteous Judgments; to awaken the Conſcience to Self-examination and Watchfulneſs againſt Sin; to teach us Humility, Patience, Self-denial, and Reſignation to the Will of God; which can never

never be ſo readily or ſo perfectly learned in an uninterrupted Eaſe and Proſperity; it is likewiſe ſo good a Tryer of the Sincerity of our Faith, and all our other Virtues; it is ſuch a Spur to Repentance and Prayer; it is ſo naturally fruitful in good Thoughts and holy Reſolutions; and is ſo inſtrumental in the mortifying all our Luſts and Corruptions, and particularly in ſubduing our Pride and Paſſions; that the Pain and Bitterneſs of it is much more than recompenſed with the real good Fruits it produces: It is certain that Nurture and Diſcipline is not more neceſſary towards the good Education and Government of a Child, than Affliction is towards the making a good Chriſtian: And therefore it is no Wonder that it is deliver'd as a certain Truth, that *Through much Tribulation we muſt enter into the Kingdom of God.* So many Benefits attending the Croſs, it is no wonder that God's Providence concurs in permitting it to fall to the Lot of good Men.

(2.) Let it be conſider'd, that if good Chriſtians had an uninterrupted Courſe of Worldly Proſperity, neither themſelves nor others could have the Comfort to know, whether they follow Chriſt for himſelf, or for the Loaves; whether they chooſe the Ways of Religion and Virtue for their own ſakes, or for the Worldly Felicity attending them; or whether they

they act from a Principle of Faith or Senſe; for it might then be readily objected to them what the Devil objected againſt *Job*; *Doth* Job *fear God for nought? Haſt thou not made an Hedge about him, and about his Houſe, and about all that he hath on every Side? Thou haſt bleſſed the Work of his Hands, and his Subſtance is increaſed in the Land. But put forth thine Hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy Face*, Job i. 9. It is therefore very convenient, both for anſwering ſuch Objections of thoſe that have no Kindneſs for Religion; and for ſatisfying good Chriſtians themſelves, as to their inward Sincerity; and to keep out Hypocrites from the Church, or to detect them after they have crept into it; that there be ſome certain way to diſtinguiſh the one from the other; and that is chiefly by the Croſs of Chriſt, as the Apoſtle remarks, *Heb.* xii. 7. *If ye endure Chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with Sons.*

So much for the firſt part of this Inquiry, the Grounds and Reaſons of this ſeemingly ſtrange Doctrine, and Diſpenſation, that the Beſt Men and the Beſt Inſtitution ſhould *be perſecuted, and evil ſpoken of.*

2. The *Second* Part of our Inquiry muſt be, Why our Saviour thought it proper ſo early to foretel this, being very apt in its own Nature to offend his weak Diſciples, and to cauſe them to fall off from him; and did not chooſe

rather to conceal it, till they were well confirmed in his Service. We have already conſider'd how neceſſary the Doctrine of the Croſs is in itſelf; ſo that all that is to be clear'd on this Head is, That it was better for our Saviour to uſe Freedom with his Diſciples, and to let them know from the Beginning, what they were to expect, than to leave them unforewarned, to be ſurpriz'd with unexpected Sufferings. For clearing of this, it is to be conſider'd, that this Conduct of our Saviour's anſwer'd the following five or ſix wiſe Ends and Purpoſes.

(1.) It is a clear Proof of our Saviour's Prophetick Spirit; and, as his other Miracles, ſerves for a Demonſtration of his Divine Authority and Commiſſion, and ſo was an excellent means of begetting Faith in his Diſciples, when they came to compare Prophecies with their Events. And it is plain, this was one Thing our Saviour intended by theſe Predictions of his Own and his Diſciples Sufferings. *I have told you, before it come to paſs*, ſays he, *that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe*; Joh. xiv. 29. And again, *Theſe Things have I told you, that when the Time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them*, Joh. xvi. 4.

(2.) This Prediction was of excellent Uſe to diſcourage Hypocrites from the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, to let them know before-hand what

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a vaſt deal of Trouble, and how little Encouragement his Diſciples were to expect from the World. Our Saviour and his Apoſtles foreſaw the Danger of this Worldly Spirit in the Church, and took abundance of Pains to keep it out. They were not more careful to invite in true Proſelytes, than to keep out falſe Pretenders. In this very Chapter, we may obſerve, that ſo ſoon as the good News of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, preached by our Saviour, and the many great Miracles he wrought, had procured him a vaſt Number of Diſciples and Followers, he immediately ſet about the undeceiving them, as to the Expectations they had of Wealth, Honour, Carnal Pleaſure, Conqueſt, and Revenge in his Service; inſtead of which, he lets them know here, that they were to expect Calumnies, Revilings, and Perſecutions. And whenever he perceived any one addreſſing him with thoſe Worldly Expectations, he ſtill obviated and prevented them, by telling them what they muſt look for from the World. This was the uſual Teſt he put Men to, before he admitted them to his Service. If they were willing to quit all their Worldly Pretenſions, and to take up their Croſs, then they were well qualified to be his Diſciples; otherwiſe, not fit for his Service, if they had ever ſo many other good Qualifications. Thus to the rich Young Man, who had ſo many other good Mo-

rals, he ſaid, *One Thing thou lackeſt; go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the Poor; and thou ſhalt have Treaſure in Heaven; and come and take up the Croſs, and follow me*; Mar. x. 21. He could not ſtand this Teſt; he was ſad at this Saying, and went away grieved: For he had great Poſſeſſions; and it ſeems his Heart was ſet upon them.

(3.) The foretelling the Croſs, was of good Uſe to give our Saviour's Diſciples a right Notion of his Kingdom, and to wean their Hearts from the World; after which, it is plain, they had very great Hankerings. Now, what could be more proper to beat down this Worldly Spirit, than to mortify them with a frequent inculcating the Doctrine of the Croſs, and to inſtruct them in the true Nature and Meaning of the Goſpel Promiſes, as relating either to the Future State of Glory in Heaven; or to an Inward Peace and Tranquillity of Mind; or to the Outward Comforts reſulting from Brotherly Love; but that ſtill they were to expect Trouble from the World; and that Perſecutions were to be a neceſſary Ingredient in all their Comforts?

(4.) Our Saviour's Foretelling the Croſs, was a good way to arm his Diſciples with Courage and Reſolution to bear it; that having it in Expectation and View, they might not be ſurprized, but duly prepared and fortified for it.

Beloved,

Beloved, ſays St. *Peter*, *think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery Tryal, which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange Thing happen'd unto you*; 1 Pet. iv. 12. It was this general Expectation of Sufferings, which ſo fortified St. *Paul*, that he was always ready to encounter them. *Behold*, ſays he, *I go bound in the Spirit unto* Jeruſalem, *not knowing the Things which ſhall befal me there: Save that the Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in every City, ſaying, that Bonds and Afflictions abide me. But none of theſe Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my Courſe with Joy, and the Miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the Goſpel of the Grace of God*, *Act.* XX. 22.

(5.) The Foretelling the Croſs, was agreeable to that Sincerity, ſo much recommended by our Saviour's Doctrine and Example. It was to deal fairly and candidly with his Diſciples, and to tell them truly what they were to expect; whereas to have concealed it from them, would have been to have deceived them, as Kidnappers do by thoſe they inveigle and trepan away into ſtrange Countries; telling them abundance of plauſible fine Stories, magnifying all the good Things, and concealing or extenuating all the Hardſhips they are to meet with. Our Lord uſes a quite contrary Method to this; telling from the Beginning

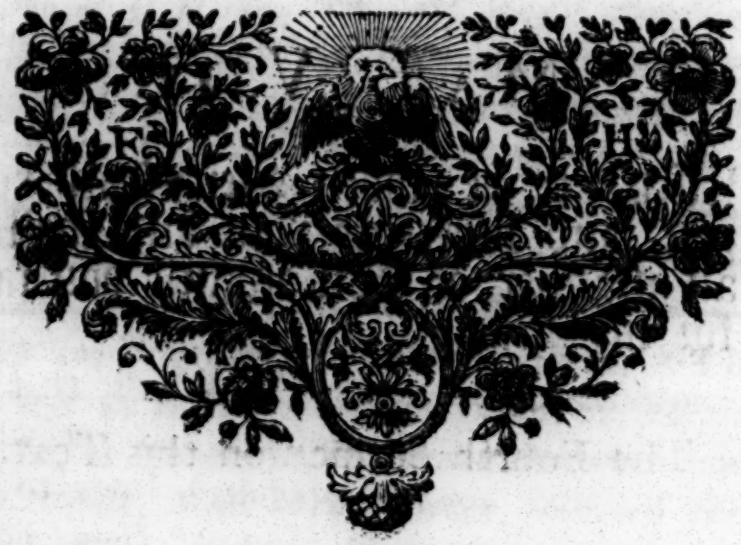
the Worſt, Men are to expect in his Service; and then comforting them under it with his Heavenly Promiſes and Example.

(6.) *Laſtly*; The Foretelling the Sufferings of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, ſerves to demonſtrate to the World, that thoſe Sufferings are voluntary, and of their own Choice; which is a very conſiderable Ingredient in them. Had our Saviour's Sufferings been involuntary, this would have made them to be no Act of His; and conſequently would have deſtroy'd all the Virtue and Merit of them. And if his Diſciples Sufferings had been involuntary, they might eaſily have declined them, by abandoning that Profeſſion which occaſion'd them. But then, all the Virtue of them had been gone, and the Sufferers had not been entitled to the Glorious Promiſes annexed to them in my Text, and in many other Paſſages of the *New Teſtament*. But now that they knew the Worſt that attended the Chriſtian Profeſſion, and yet would chooſe it, this ſhews a prevalent Love to the Truth, and a Preference of what they hoped from Chriſt in another Life, to all that they could loſe in this.

Thus now we have conſidered both the Reaſonableneſs of this Diſpenſation of the Croſs, and why it was neceſſary that it ſhould be ſo early foretold to our Saviour's Diſciples. And

if

if this would ſcare away any of them from his Service, it was much better that they ſhould never engage with him, than, after they had been his Diſciples, to diſhonour Him, and his Religion, by their Cowardice and Apoſtacy in the Day of Trial.



SERMON XVIII.

MAT. V. 11.

Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.

The Fourth Sermon on this Text.

III. THE *Third* Thing I propoſed to conſider in this Prediction of Sufferings to our Saviour's Diſciples, was, how it was fulfilled in the Primitive Times of Chriſtianity; for this is one good way to find out the Meaning of Prophecies or Predictions, even to compare them with the Events. And tho' the Truths our Saviour

Saviour here foretold have relation to true Chriſtians in all Times, who are generally very ill uſed by the World, no doubt they had a more particular Regard to the Apoſtles and thoſe Firſt Chriſtians, to whom they were ſpoken; *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you.* Now that this Matter of Fact was literally ſo, is plain from all that remains to us of Church Hiſtory: The firſt Attempt to deſtroy the Church, was by Perſecution; but, God be praiſed, this way was ſo far from prevailing, that the Church was never more glorious in all manner of Chriſtian Graces and Virtues, than ſhe was in thoſe Days, like Gold well purified in the Fire from all its Droſs and Alloy. And as the Sufferings of the Apoſtles and Firſt Chriſtians were thus Notorious, it was as notorious that thoſe their Sufferings were purely on Account of their Religion. They were not ſo much as accuſed then of Sedition, Treaſon, or Rebellion, with relation to the State; or of Theft, Robbery, Murder, or any other Capital Crime, with relation to private Men. All the Crime laid to their Charge, was an obſtinate Reſoluteneſs to own their Religion, and to adhere to it. Some of their Enemies imputed this their Boldneſs to Melancholy, as if they had been weary of their Lives; others to Vanity, as if they had been proud of the Honour of Martyrdom: But there was no Reaſon

for

for either of theſe Imputations. For, as to Melancholy, they ſhew'd in all other Reſpects ſuch an even Temper of Mind, and went to Death with ſo much Cheerfulneſs and Joy, as is directed here in the Words immediately following my Text, that of all Things it was the moſt unlike to that diſmal Paſſion. And as to Vanity, the known Humility and Modeſty of the other Parts of their Lives did clearly evince the Falſhood of that Aſperſion. Beſides, what great Honour could they expect from theſe their Martyrdoms, when many common Perſons, of no Name, or Note, went boldly and patiently to Death for their Religion, who could not ſo much as hope that their Names would be preſerved, but that, in ſo great Crowds of Sufferers, they muſt be buried in Oblivion? It was a true Character the Apoſtle St. *Paul* gave of thoſe Times, and of the Chriſtian Sufferers in thoſe Days, that *If in this Life only they had had Hope in Chriſt, of all Men they ſhould have been the moſt miſerable*; 1 Cor. xv. 19. So plain it was, both that they were expos'd to great Sufferings, and that thoſe Sufferings were on Account of their better Hopes in a future State. But then,

IV. It is a real Queſtion, Whether this Prediction of our Saviour's is to be extended farther than to thoſe early Times, when the Secular Powers were Enemies to Chriſtianity; and

and whether, and how far we are concerned in this Doctrine, who live in the more peaceable Times of the Church, when she has the Happiness of a Legal Establishment, and Kings are become her Nursing Fathers, and Queens her Nursing Mothers: Which is the *Fourth* Thing I propos'd to consider from this Prediction. And for Resolution of it, I shall inquire into these *Three* Things, upon which the Resolution of this Question will depend. 1. What Light the Holy Scripture offers in this Matter? 2. How far it is true that the publick Enmity against Christians is ceased, from the Empire's turning Christian? 3. How far the Secular Spirit in the Church is apt to expose it still to Persecution? From the Consideration of all which, it will, I doubt, appear, that good Christians are not yet exempted from being concerned in this Prediction, that they should be reviled, calumniated, and persecuted for Christ's sake.

1. To begin with the Holy Scriptures: There are a great many Things in them relating to this Matter, which seem to have a general Aspect upon all Times, and not to be restrained only to the Times of publick Persecution. I shall instance in some of the chief of them. St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas* deliver it as a general true Doctrine, that *We must through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God*; *Acts* xiv. 22.

And

And altho' theſe Words ſeem to point at Afflictions in general; if we look into the Context, and conſider the Occaſion upon which they were ſpoke, which was a late Perſecution they had endured in *Lycaonia*, we may conclude that they chiefly reſpect the Perſecutions we are to endure for the Faith. There is another Paſſage yet more expreſs to the ſame purpoſe: It is 2 *Tim.* iii. 12. where St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of the Perſecutions he had endured at *Antioch*, *Iconium*, and *Lyſtra*, out of all which the Lord had delivered him, adds, *Yea, and all that will live Godly in* Chriſt Jeſus *ſhall ſuffer Perſecution.* And the ſame Apoſtle, *Gal.* iv. 29. ſeems to make it a general Remark for all Times, that Carnal, Worldly Men, ſhould perſecute the Pious and Virtuous. *But as then*, ſays he, *he that was born after the Fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even ſo it is now. As then*, ſpeaking of the Days of *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*; and he might have run it up much higher, to the Days of *Cain* and *Abel.* So ancient and ſo natural is the Obſervation. And eſpecially it holds true in all Ages, of thoſe who have been the moſt zealous Reformers of Mankind, the Prophets and Apoſtles, *John the Baptiſt*, and *Chriſt* himſelf; as St. *Stephen* roundly upbraids the *Jews*, *Acts* vii. 51. *Ye ſtiff-necked and uncircumciſed in Heart and Ears, ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt; as your Fathers did, ſo do ye. Which of the Prophets*

have

have not your Fathers perſecuted? And they have ſlain them which ſhewed before of the coming of the Juſt One, of whom ye have been now the Betrayers and Murderers. So that the Holy Scripture ſeems to make the Obſervation general, and to put it upon a laſting Foot, that as long as there are wicked and good Men in the World, the wicked will perſecute the good, eſpecially thoſe who endeavour to reclaim and reform them.

2. Let us conſider how far it is true that the publick Enmity againſt Chriſtians is ceaſed, by the coming over of ſo many States and Kingdoms to the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith. Upon this Subject it will be granted, that there are very conſiderable Parts of the World as yet ſitting in Darkneſs, and in the Region of the Shadow of Death; and that the Propagation of the Goſpel in all ſuch Countries is apt to be attended with the old Dangers. But beſides the many Nations of Infidels, it is to be conſidered, that there are a great many Parties, Sects and Hereſies, among thoſe called Chriſtians; and that they commonly perſecute one another with as keen, or a more keen Hatred, than Heathens do Chriſtians; as was foretold by St. *Paul*, in his Speech to the *Epheſian* Biſhops. *I know*, ſays he, *that, after my Departure, grievous Wolves ſhall enter in among you, not ſparing the Flock; alſo of your own ſelves ſhall Men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe Things, to draw away Diſciples after them*, Acts xx. 29.

And

And in that forecited Place, 2 *Tim.* iii. 13. after he had ſaid, that *all that will live Godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer Perſecution*; he adds, *But evil Men and Seducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving, and being deceived.* Particularly, the Perſecutions of Antichriſt are foretold at large in the Book of the *Revelation of St.* John. And indeed the Church of *Rome*, that one Branch of the Heretical Church, has ſhed more Chriſtian Blood, by way of Perſecution, than ever was ſhed by all the Heathen Emperors. So that it is not the Empire's turning Chriſtian, that has put an entire ſtop to Perſecution, or to the fulfilling of our Saviour's Prediction in my Text. But,

3. It is to be further conſider'd, that there is a Worldly and Carnal Spirit among mere Nominal Chriſtians, which is as apt to perſecute the truly Pious and Godly Chriſtians as ever. For there was at the Time when the Empire turned Chriſtian, and ever ſince there has been, even in all Chriſtian Kingdoms and Commonwealths, a great Number which crowd into the Church, of ſuch as are mere Nominal Chriſtians, but really Heathens, or Men of no Religion, who are as apt as ever the Heathens were, to perſecute the ſincere Chriſtians: It is true, their Perſecutions are not to Blood; (for *that* the Laws and Conſtitutions of thoſe Chriſtian Countries will not allow of) but they go

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to all the other ways and means their Malice and Wickedneſs can invent. Sometimes they blaſt their Reputation by Lies and Calumnies; ſometimes they prepare Traps of Doubtful or Unlawful Oaths, to enſnare their Conſciences; ſometimes they require their Aſſent to Dangerous or Falſe Opinions; and ſometimes their Compliance with Superſtitious or Sinful Practices. It is certain they have a great Advantage of them in all ſuch matters, being either of no Principles themſelves, or ſuch looſe ones, that they can eaſily ſhift Sides, and make their Principles bend to their Intereſt: So that there is ſcarce any way left, whereby they can be involved in Perſecution, while they have all the Advantages of involving others at their Pleaſure. It is a very unequal Match then betwixt a Good and a Bad Man, in point of Perſecution; the Good Man being tied up by the ſtrict Rules of Religion, Honour, Virtue, and good Conſcience; and the Bad Man left at large, to do as much hurt to his Neighbour as makes for his Worldly Intereſt.

V. I am now, in the laſt Place, to draw a few Practical Inferences from this Prediction of our Saviour's, concerning the Perſecution of good Chriſtians.

Inf. 1. The *Firſt* ſhall be to fortify and prepare us for it. And, in Order to that, I ſhall offer

offer a few Preparatives, both by way of Conſideration and Practice.

Firſt; By way of Conſideration.

1. Let us conſider, that whatever Perſecutions befal good Chriſtians, are not only foreſeen and fore-ordained by God, but choſen and allotted by him for their Good. If we conſider Perſecution, as it is deſigned by the inferiour Inſtruments of it, it will be apt to provoke our Reſentment; but if we conſider it as it is deſigned by Almighty God, with all the bleſſed Fruits and Conſequences of it, both upon our ſelves and others, it will diſpoſe us to Meekneſs and Patience; and we ſhall be fully convinced, that it tends mightily to the Glory of God, and to the Good of the Church in general, and of every individual Chriſtian that ſhall be exerciſed thereby. Whoſoever will be at the Pains to compare the Church in its proſperous State in this World with the ſame Church in Times of Perſecution, he will find that it has got more by exemplary Faith and Patience, than ever it did by the greateſt worldly Proſperity; the one being apt to reduce the Church to True and Real Profeſſors; the other, to fill it with Hypocrites.

2. Let us conſider, that Perſecutions, tho' very unpleaſant and untoothſome, yet are, in their own Nature, and as deſigned by God, ſovereignly Medicinal, for Purging us of all Corruption,

ruption, and for Purifying and Refining us, as Silver and Gold are purified in the Refiner's Fire. The Apoſtles often take notice of this. St. *Peter* obſerves of this State, that *Tho' for a Seaſon they are in Heavineſs thro' manifold Temptations, yet the Trial of their Faith being much more precious than of Gold that periſheth, though it be tried with Fire, will be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of* Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* i. 6. And St. *James*, in the Beginning of his Epiſtle, exhorts the Chriſtians to whom he writes, *To count it all Joy when they fall into diverſe Temptations; knowing that the trying of their Faith worketh Patience. But let Patience*, ſays he, *have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*, Jam. i. 2. And St. *Paul* ſays, *We glory in Tribulations alſo, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience; and Patience, Experience; and Experience, Hope; and Hope maketh not aſhamed*, Rom. v. 3. So many noble Conſequences of Sufferings for a Good Cauſe, patiently endur'd, did theſe great Apoſtles obſerve.

3. We are to conſider, that Perſecution, being the Portion which Chriſt has allotted to his Beſt Servants, is not to be look'd upon as any Sign of God's Anger or Diſpleaſure, but rather of the tender Care he takes of us, that we be not intoxicated and bewitch'd with the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of the World; but that our Hearts may be weaned from it, and ſet on

Heaven. Proſperity, among many other Inconveniencies, enclines us to ſet up our Reſt here; whereas Perſecution and Adverſity not only makes Death welcome, but encreaſes our longing Deſires after Heaven; and makes us wiſh to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, in that ſafe Retreat where the Malice and Perſecution of Men can't reach: For, as our Saviour tells us, *When they have killed the Body, they have no more that they can do*, Luke xii. 4.

4. Let us conſider, that the way of the Croſs is that which Chriſt has not only honour'd here, by aſſuming it into the Number of the Beatitudes; but has particularly promis'd an high Degree of Glory to it in Heaven; as we ſhall hear hereafter, when we come to conſider theſe Words, *For great is your Reward in Heaven*; and that it is the Way which he hath honour'd and ſweeten'd by his own Example, and that of the Prophets and Apoſtles, and moſt eminent Saints in all Ages of the Church.

I come next to the Preparatives for Perſecution, by way of Practice.

1. If the Times are ever ſo quiet and peaceable, let no Perſecution ſurprize us, as if any ſtrange unexpected Thing happen'd unto us. It is commonly the Suddenneſs and Unexpectedneſs of Troubles that rifles and diſcompoſes our Minds, more than the Weight and Burthen, more than the Fierceneſs and Sharpneſs of them. If we

we will either conſult the Hiſtories of Times paſt before we were born, or what we have ſeen in our own Days; how naturally Troubles ſpring up to Good Men; we have no Reaſon to be ſanguine in our Hopes of Peace and Quietneſs in our Days, but ſhould ſuit our Deportment to our Expectation of troubleſome Times.

2. Another good Exerciſe of our Thoughts, with Relation to Troubles and Perſecutions, is to endeavour to look beyond the immediate Authors and Inſtruments, and to accept them as out of the Hands of God. While upon thoſe Occaſions we pore upon the Baſeneſs, Falſhood, Villany, and Cruelty of Men, we find ſtill freſh matter to feed our Anger and Reſentment; but when we look up unto God, and conſider thoſe Troubles as his Fatherly Chaſtiſements, and Men only as his Inſtruments, we have all Reaſon then to be quiet and contented, and to bear the Croſs patiently, conſidering it is what our Saviour foretold to the Chriſtian Church in general, and what is deſigned for our own good in particular. And if they drive us to God, and to the Exerciſe of fervent Prayer and Supplication, we may confidently expect to be comforted and ſupported under them, and in due Time to be delivered out of them.

3. The beſt way to encounter Perſecution, is to keep a Good Conſcience. An inward Conſciouſneſs of Innocence pulls out the Sting out of

all Troubles; and not only ſo, but gives a firm Hope and Courage, and Confidence in God, which adds an incredible Strength to the Mind, that it is not eaſily broken or ſhaken with Troubles. But when the inward Laſhes of Conſcience are added to the outward Smart of Afflictions, then it is they drive to an utter Deſpondency of Mind, and make the Sufferer not only Impatient, but Heartleſs and Diffident.

4. Let us, during the whole Courſe of our Lives, accuſtom our ſelves to Sobriety, and Temperance, Patience, and the Exerciſe of Adverſity in the midſt of Proſperity, that in the Day of Perſecution we may not faint through Softneſs and Effeminacy, but may cheerfully go through the afflicting part of Suffering, as a Thing for which we were well fortified and prepared. We ſee from daily Experience, that they who have been from their Infancy accuſtom'd to an hard Bed and coarſe Fare, can much more eaſily bear with all manner of Hardſhip when it comes, than they who have been delicately and ſoftly bred from the Cradle, and never knew what it was to be deny'd in any of their Humours.

5. *Laſtly*; If we would prepare our ſelves for Suffering, let us frequently in our Minds contemplate Heaven and Happineſs, and conſider it as approaching apace to Good Men,

and

and that it is not now far off; and that theſe very Troubles, ſome of them immediately convey us thither, and all of them further us in our Journey; at the End of which, we ſhall have a glorious Iſſue of them, when we ſhall find that *This light Affliction, which endures for a Moment, ſhall have wrought for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.*

Inf. 2. The ſecond Inference from this our Saviour's Prediction of the Croſs to Good Chriſtians, ſhall be to comfort all that are perſecuted for a Good Cauſe, and the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience. They are not abandoned and expos'd, as the World thinks, to the Fury of their Adverſaries; there is a watchful Providence that order'd all theſe Things, which foretold them, and contrived them on purpoſe for our good, and which bleſſes and ſanctifies them for carrying on the great Ends of the Propagation of the Goſpel in general, and the Growth of Grace, and Preparation for the Crown of Martyrdom in particular. But for the further Comfort of Sufferers on thoſe Religious Accounts, let us next conſider,

The *Second* Thing I obſerved in the Words, namely, the Bleſſing here pronounced to all ſuch; *Bleſſed are ye* when ye ſhall be ſo uſed; *when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.*

Only before we come to it, it will be neceſſary briefly to take notice of two Properties of the Virtue it ſelf; namely, *Firſt*, that the Sufferings to which the Bleſſing is annexed muſt be undeſerved; the Revilings and evil Speakings muſt be falſe; and the Perſecutions muſt be for Chriſt's ſake; that is, either for adhering to the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith, or for doing of Chriſtian Duty. *Secondly*, It is ſuppoſed here that we are totally paſſive, as well as innocent, in theſe Sufferings. For, if we go about to avenge our ſelves, and to return Reviling for Reviling, evil Speaking for evil Speaking, Perſecution for Perſecution; if we go about to exact Satisfaction at our own Hands, then we are no longer the patient, innocent Sufferers, here deſcribed, to whom the Bleſſing is annexed.

And now to come to the Bleſſing it ſelf, it may be conſider'd either as a preſent or a future Bleſſing. For, they are *now* bleſſed; *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you*; and likewiſe, *Great is your Reward in Heaven.* At preſent, it is certainly a bleſſed Temper of Mind, which diſpoſes us humbly and patiently, I add, couragiouſly, to bear all manner of Hardſhips for our Duty. They have great Inward Peace and Tranquillity in their own Minds, and have a great Command of their

Paſſions,

Paſſions, whoever they are that can thus *in Patience poſſeſs their Souls*, Luke xxi. 19. And it is a further Bleſſing attending them at preſent, that the Divine Providence concerns it ſelf to right them who commit their Cauſe to God. He will clear their injured Reputations; as the *Pſalmiſt* has it, *Pſ.* xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord; truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs; and he ſhall bring forth thy Righteouſneſs as the Light, and thy Judgment as the Noon-day.* Further, he will raiſe us up Friends to provide for us, and to comfort us in Troubles, better Friends and more ſure Supplies than we loſt for his ſake, according to that moſt gracious, but little underſtood, or believed, or conſidered Promiſe of the *Hundred fold at preſent*, beſides Everlaſting Life to come, *Mat.* xix. 29. He will remove, or abate, or diſappoint the Fury of our Enemies; and in due Time deliver us out of all our Troubles: Or if he think not fit to ſend us this Temporal Deliverance, he will do for us what is infinitely better, that is, he will tranſlate us to the Happineſs of the Future State; which is moſt particularly annexed to this Beatitude at the next Verſe: *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: For great is your Reward in Heaven.*

But I ſhall refer this great Encouragement to the next Opportunity, that we may have Time to conſider it more at Leiſure than could be expected now in the End of a Sermon. I recommend what has been ſaid to your ſerious Meditations; and your Meditations to God's Bleſſing. *To him be all Praiſe*, &c.

SER-

SERMON XIX.

MAT. V. 12.

Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: *For great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets, which were before you.*

The Fifth Sermon on this Text.

OUR Bleſſed Saviour having inſiſted more largely on this laſt, than on any of the other Beatitudes, it will not be thought ſtrange, I hope, that we dwell longer upon it; it being my Deſign chiefly to open up and recommend his Notions and Sentiments, and to apply

apply them to our own Uſe and Practice, as we ſee he recommended them to the Practice of his Diſciples.

In treating of this *Beatitude* of *Patience under Sufferings*, there were Three Branches, I obſerved, of our Saviour's Diſcourſe.

I. That he pronounces a Bleſſing in general to all that are *Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, with a particular Encouragement, that *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake: For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

II. That he applies this general Doctrine to his Diſciples, acquainting them, that this Bleſſed State of Suffering Perſecution for his ſake and the Goſpel's, ſhould be their Lot and Portion. *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly for my ſake.*

III. That he gives his Directions to his Diſciples, as to their patient and cheerful Deportment under their perſecuted Circumſtances; and comforts them with the Promiſe of a great Reward in Heaven; and with the Encouragement, that in ſuch Circumſtances they are in the right way thither, it being the ſame way which the Prophets had gone before them. *Re-*

joyce,

joyce, and be exceeding glad: For great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

Now having in ſome former Diſcourſes conſider'd the *Firſt* and *Second* of theſe; namely, the Bleſſing pronounced in general to them who ſhould be *perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, with our Saviour's Prediction, that this ſhould be the Lot of his Diſciples; I come now to the *Third* and *Laſt*; namely, the Directions and Comforts he ſuggeſts in ſuch a Caſe, which are contained in this 12th Verſe. *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: For great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets, which were before you.*

In the Words we may obſerve theſe two Things.

1. A comfortable Direction, when we ſuffer for Chriſt or our Duty. *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad.*

2. The Reaſons of that Direction, which are two; one taken from the great Reward prepared for ſuch Sufferers in Heaven; For, *Great is your Reward in Heaven.* The other, from the moſt Honourable Company of the Prophets it places them in; at the ſame Time ſeparating them from that worſt of Company, and worſt of Characters, the Perſecutors. *For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

I begin with the comfortable Direction, how we are to behave our ſelves, when we are put to ſuffer unjuſtly for Chriſt or our Duty. *Rejoyce,* ſays our Saviour, *and be exceeding glad.* If we conſider the Spirit of the World, there is nothing to which it has a greater Averſion than to this Bearing of the Croſs; and whenever the Neceſſity of their hard Fate is ſuch, that they can't avoid it, they are ſo far from undergoing it cheerfully, that they reſiſt and oppoſe it with all the Fury and Violence they can; to that Degree, that they value not what Diſorders and Confuſions they bring into the World by their Oppoſition and Reſiſtance. But we have not ſo learned Chriſt. Whoſoever they are that thus flee to the Arms of Reſiſtance to oppoſe the Croſs, muſt take care that they go upon a good foot as to their Temporal Rights and Privileges; I mean, not only that they have a Good Cauſe, but likewiſe that the Laws allow them to defend it in ſuch a manner; otherwiſe they have no Encouragement from Chriſt's Doctrine or Example to any thing elſe in ſuch a Caſe, beſides a cheerful Paſſive Obedience. Some others there are, who, tho' they will not flee to the Arms of Reſiſtance, when called to Suffer, do yet diſcharge that Duty in ſuch a repining, diſcontented manner, that it ſavours more of a Spirit of Pride, Anger, and Reſentment, than of the meek and humble

humble Spirit of the Goſpel, which, as appears from my Text, is to take Sufferings not only patiently, but joyfully. *Ye took joyfully the Spoiling of your Goods*, ſays the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, *Heb.* x. 34. And the Apoſtles *came away from the Council, rejoycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for the Name of Chriſt*, Acts v. 41. This Precept in my Text ſtands in direct Oppoſition to that melancholy, dumpiſh, dejected Spirit, which is ſo far from being cheerful under Troubles, that it is ſcarce ever ſatisfied with any Circumſtances of Life at all, tho' ever ſo eaſy and comfortable. There is no ſort of People contribute more to bring up a bad Report on Religion, and the true Fear of God, than theſe uneaſy, melancholy, diſcontented Perſons, who are always fretting and repining at every Thing; and behave themſelves ſo, as if they thought it inconſiſtent with a Spirit of Religion, ever to be gay or merry, or to look cheerful and well pleaſed. Theſe Perſons are like the evil Spyes whom *Joſhua* ſent to view the Land of *Canaan*; who being fearful and cowardly themſelves, and their Fears, as is uſual, magnifying all Dangers, made it their Buſineſs to ſpread their Fears through the whole Camp of *Iſrael*, and to diſcourage the Hearts, and weaken the Hands of the People, by telling them, That it was a Land which ate up its Inhabitants; and that the People

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they ſaw in it were of great Stature; and that there were Giants there, in Compariſon of whom they themſelves ſeemed to be but ſo many Graſhoppers; *Numb.* xiii. 32. Thus theſe ſad melancholy People, with their diſcontented Thoughts and ruful Faces, bring up an evil Report on the Chriſtian Religion, as if it were a Religion which deprives the Mind of all true Comfort and Joy; and poſſeſſes it with Sorrow and Melancholy.

To obviate all theſe diſhonourable Notions of Religion, and withal to help us to a right Senſe of this Duty of preſerving a cheerful Mind, and a Spirit of Joy and Gladneſs under the hardeſt Circumſtances of the Croſs, I ſhall apply my ſelf to the following Particulars.

1. To conſider the Nature and Importance of this Duty of *Rejoycing, and being exceeding glad, when we ſuffer for Chriſt, or for Righteouſneſs.*

2. Becauſe this ſeems extreme difficult and unnatural, it will be fit to conſider the Grounds and Reaſons of the Duty, in Order to recommend it to our Eſteem and Affection.

3. I will point at ſome Ways and Means to facilitate the Practice of it.

I. *Firſt* then, let us conſider the Nature and Importance of this Duty of Rejoycing, and being exceeding glad, when we ſuffer for Chriſt, or for Righteouſneſs. The Mirth of the World is commonly a vain, fooliſh and unreaſonable Thing,

Thing, as being either a Suppreſſion of Thought, under Pretence of laying aſide all Care; and this is done by a Clutter of Company; an Intoxication of Drink; the Lulling aſleep of the Thoughts by Muſick, Gaming, or Theatrical Diverſions; the Witchcraft of Luſt and Carnal Pleaſure; or any other thing of that Nature, which takes the Mind off the Hinges, and hinders it from reflecting on the numerous Troubles of Life, or the greater ones of Death, Judgment, and Eternity. Or elſe, this Worldly Mirth and Joy is occaſioned by ſome Temporary Felicity and Succeſs, in acquiring a large Share of the Things of this World; like the Rich Man in the Goſpel, who fed his Joy from the Conſideration of his full Barns. *Soul, thou haſt much Goods laid up for many Years; take thine Eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry*, Luk. xii. 19. But this Duty of *Rejoycing* in my Text, is a much more ſolid and ſerious Thing than that it can be founded on either of theſe Bottoms. It is ſo far from being grounded on an Abſence or Deprivation of Thought, that it requires a thorough Conſideration of Intellectual as well as Senſual, and of Eternal as well as Temporal Matters; and it is likewiſe ſo far from reſting on Creature Comforts without God, that the very Life and Eſſence of it conſiſts in an Acquieſcence in God's Will and Pleaſure; in a Conformity of the Heart and Thoughts to his Sentiments; in the Teſti-

Teſtimony of our Conſciences, that we follow ſuch Courſes as pleaſe him beſt; and in the well-grounded Hope of the Enjoyment and Fruition of him to all Eternity. A Regard to God is ſo eſſential to this Joy, that in the Holy Scriptures it uſually enters into the Definition, or Deſcription of it; for it is called *a Rejoycing in the Lord*, or *a Rejoycing in* Chriſt Jeſus; or *a Rejoycing in hope of the Glory of God*; or *the having Peace in Chriſt, tho' we have Trouble from the World*; or *Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*; or *the being filled with all Peace and Joy in Relieving*. So neceſſary it is that God be the Object of this Joy. I ſhall next briefly conſider the Acts of it.

1. The Principal Act of this Duty of Rejoycing, and which is the Foundation of all the reſt, is a prevalent Love to God, which diſpoſes us to a Conformity to his bleſſed Will in all things; and rejoyces in every thing that may fit us for the Enjoyment of him; be it ever ſo afflicting and grievous at preſent. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſpeaking of this ſame Duty of Rejoycing in hope of the Glory of God, with all the bleſſed Fruits and Effects of it, aſſigns the Reaſon of all to be, *Becauſe the Love of God is ſhed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto us*, Rom. v. 5.

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2. Another Act of this Duty of Rejoycing, when we are *reviled and perſecuted for Chriſt's ſake*, is the great Duty of Self-Reſignation. *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*, Mat. xxvi. 39. By this Duty, we oblige our ſelves not only to an External Compliance with the moſt Afflicting Diſpenſations of God's Providence, but to an Internal Approbation of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of them, as being entirely wrapt up in the Will of God, and knowing and believing that he contrives all for our Benefit; particularly, that Perſecutions and Afflictions are excellent Means to wean our Hearts from the World, and to ſettle them in the Love of Heaven.

3. Another Link of this Chain of Duties, annexed to Rejoycing and being exceeding glad in the Text, is Patience under Troubles. For whereas the Uneaſineſs of Impatience creates Melancholy, which is a fruitful Source of all Grief and Vexation; on the contrary, the Suppreſſing of all theſe uneaſy Reſentments, which is the Work of Patience, is a great part of the Buſineſs of this Cheerful Temper of Mind here recommended. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* yokes theſe two Graces together, *Rejoycing in Hope*, and *Patient in Tribulation*, Rom. xii. 12.

4. Contentment is another Duty flowing from this cheerful Temper of Mind. For it is impoſſible, where the Spirit is ſo Cheerful under Afflictions and Perſecutions, that there can be

any thing like Murmuring or Diſcontent. Nay, indeed this cheerful Temper imports ſome higher Degree of Satisfaction than bare Contentment; even a Gratitude and Thankfulneſs to Almighty God under his Corrections.

5. This Temper of Mind implies a Lively Hope of Good Things to come in a Future State. This is included in that Proſpect and Regard to the great Reward to come, which immediately follows. *Great is your Reward in Heaven.* This Eye to the Recompence of Reward keeps up the Heart under all its preſent Afflictions, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays; *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the Goodneſs of the Lord in the Land of the Living,* Pſ. xxvii. 13.

6. From all theſe reſults a Conſtant Spring of Joy, ſuch as no Melancholy or Diſaſtrous Accidents can dry up. Other Worldly Joys may be loud and noiſy, but they are ſhort-liv'd, like *the Crackling of Thorns under a Pot,* to which *Solomon* compares *the Laughter of the Fool,* Eccl. vii. 6. But this is a Permanent Joy, that will ſtick by a Man in all the Changes of Outward Fortune. Let ever ſo bad Tidings be brought him, they ſhake him no more than the Waves do a firm Rock, according to thoſe Obſervations of the *Pſalmiſt's, Unto the Upright there ariſeth Light in the Darkneſs: Surely he ſhall not be moved for ever: He ſhall not be afraid of evil Tydings, his Heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord,* Pſ. cxii.

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4, 6, 7. And elſewhere he makes his Boaſt, *God is our Refuge and Strength, a very preſent Help in Trouble; therefore will not we fear, tho' the Earth be removed, and tho' the Mountains be carry'd into the midſt of the Sea; tho' the Waters thereof roar and be troubled; tho' the Mountains ſhake with the Swelling thereof: There is a River, the Streams whereof ſhall make glad the City of God, the holy Place of the Tabernacles of the moſt High,* Pſ. xlvi. 1.

7. *Laſtly*; Another Ingredient of this Cheerful Temper of Mind, is a ſedate Courage, not to be conquer'd by all the moſt formidable Things in Nature. *It is written,* ſaith St. *Paul, For thy ſake are we killed all the Day long; we are accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter. Nay, in all theſe Things we are more than Conquerours through him that loved us. For I am perſuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things preſent, nor Things to come, nor Heighth, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God, which is in* Chriſt Jeſus *our Lord,* Rom. viii. 36.

So much for the Nature and Importance of the Duty of Cheerfulneſs under Perſecution for our Duty, here enjoyned. But becauſe this ſeems a little difficult and unnatural under ſuch grievous Affliction, I ſhall therefore proceed,

II. *Secondly*, As I propos'd, to conſider the Grounds and Reaſons of the Duty, in Order to recommend it to our Eſteem and Affection.

1. Then, it may recommend this Duty to us, that it is one of the Chiefeſt Points of Honour in the Chriſtian Church, thus cheerfully to ſuffer for Chriſt. As among Soldiers, the Higheſt Poſt of Honour is that which expoſes them moſt to Danger; ſo it is in the Chriſtian Warfare, it is reckon'd the Chief Poſt of Honour to ſuffer for the Name of Chriſt. So we find the Apoſtles eſteemed it. For after having been beaten in the *Jewiſh Council* for Preaching the Faith of Chriſt, they looked upon it as a moſt Happy and Honourable Thing; for it is ſaid, *They went away from the Preſence of the Council, rejoycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for the Name of* Jeſus, *Acts* v. 41. And in that Great Character which was given by our Lord of St. *Paul* to *Ananias*, who was prepoſſeſs'd with a bad Opinion of him, This of his Sufferings for Chriſt makes the Chiefeſt Flower; *Go thy way*, ſays he, *for he is a choſen Veſſel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of* Iſrael: *For I will ſhew him how great Things he muſt ſuffer for my Name's ſake*, *Acts* ix. 16. This of Suffering for Chriſt, is a much higher Step of Honour than the bare Believing in him; as we may gather from St. *Paul*'s Encomium to the

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Philippians. Unto you it is given, ſays he, *in the Behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake*, Phil. i. 29.

2. Suffering cheerfully to Martyrdom for Chriſt will be honour'd by God with the Higheſt Honours in Heaven. This is plainly imply'd in our Saviour's Anſwer to the Requeſt of the Mother of *Zebedee*'s Children; which was, *That they might ſit one on his Right Hand, the other on his Left in his Kingdom*, Mat. xx. 22. To this Requeſt he firſt reply'd, that *They knew not what they asked*; for indeed they underſtood great Temporal Honours by that Requeſt. And withal, he adds ſomething to let them underſtand, that whoſoever arriv'd at thoſe Firſt Places in his Kingdom, muſt come at them in the way of Suffering, in which he was to give them an Example. *Are ye able*, ſays he, *to drink of the Cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptized with the Baptiſm that I am baptized with?* Now it appears afterwards, that by *the Cup*, he meant the bitter Cup of his Paſſion. *If it be poſſible*, ſays he, *let this Cup paſs from me*, Matt. xxvi. 39. And the ſame is meant by the Baptiſm; *I have a Baptiſm*, ſays he, *to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitened till it be accompliſhed!* Luke xii. 50. And therefore the plain Importance of his Queſtion to the Sons of *Zebedee* was, Are ye able to undergo Martyrdom for the Truth, as I ſhall? For to ſuch the

Higheſt Places in my Kingdom are reſerved. And is not this moſt agreeable to what follows in my Text, *Great is your Reward in Heaven?* The Phraſe is not as in ſome of the other Beatitudes, *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; but, *Great is your Reward in Heaven*; meaning, that the moſt Honourable, and moſt Happy Stations in Heaven it ſelf ſhall be conferr'd upon them, who cheerfully ſuffer for Chriſt's ſake.

3. Suffering cheerfully for Righteouſneſs ſake, is the Greateſt Service which can be done to the Church, whether for Propagating the Faith among Infidels, or for Confirming true Believers. Perhaps, next to Miracles, and the wonderful Holy Lives of the firſt Chriſtians, there was nothing contributed more to awaken the ſecure World to the Conſideration of the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, than the ſtrange Courage of the Martyrs, who ſo freely and cheerfully laid down their Lives for the Truth; to that Degree, that it became a common Obſervation, that the Blood of the Martyrs was the Seed of the Church. And as to Believers themſelves, it muſt needs be a great Confirmation of their Faith, and contribute mightily to the enlivening of their Courage, to ſee the Cheerfulneſs and Bravery of their Fellow-Chriſtians. As in an Army, Courage inſpires Courage into our Fellow-Soldiers, ſo it is among Chriſtians; eſpecially while they all firmly believe that not one

one of thoſe who die thus bravely Confeſſing Chriſt, ſhall go without his Reward. In common Armies, there is many a Man behaves himſelf gallantly, who yet has no Reward beſtowed upon him. Perhaps they are all ſo brave, that the Merits of one are not to be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of another; perhaps every Gallant Action doth not come to the Knowledge of the General, or of the Prince; or if it doth, they have not Places or Rewards for all. But there are Better Orders obſerved in this noble Army of Martyrs. Here no Man's Cheerfulneſs or Courage in Chriſt's Service, is in Danger of being either unknown, or overlooked. So ſurely and ſo quickly do the Rewards follow the Sufferings.

4. This Cheerfulneſs of Mind, which diſpoſes us to rejoyce under Sufferings, is ſo excellent a Quality, that it fits and enlivens us to ſet about every Duty with Courage and Alacrity. The Perſon who is poſſeſſed of this good Temper, is in no Danger of Drooping and Deſpondency, of Sloth and Lazineſs, of Off-puts and Delays, of Fear and Cowardice, or of any of thoſe many Snares and Temptations, which are occaſioned by Melancholy and Dejection of Mind. Such a Perſon cheerfully wades thro' all Troubles, encounters the greateſt Dangers, and has the moſt compoſed Mind and regular Thoughts; and conſequently is in the fitteſt

Temper and Diſpoſition for Duty at all times, and in all the moſt diſaſtrous Circumſtances of Life.

5. *Laſtly*; It is ſufficient to recommend this Cheerfulneſs in Suffering, that it is ſo good a Mark of the right Way which leads to Heaven and Happineſs, both as it has been the uſual Fate of the Beſt Men, eſpecially the great Reformers of Mankind, to be ſo ill uſed by the World; and likewiſe moſt patiently and cheerfully to undergo theſe Perſecutions. *Firſt*, I ſay, it has been their uſual Fate to be very ill uſed by the World. It was a ſtrange Queſtion of St. *Stephen*'s to the *Jews*; *Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers perſecuted?* Act. vii. 52. So general was the Obſervation, that he challenged them to produce him ſo much as one Exception. This Obſervation had been made to his Hand by our Saviour in my Text. *So perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* And elſewhere he tells them, *Behold, I ſend unto you Prophets, and Wiſe Men, and Scribes; and ſome of them ye ſhall kill and crucify, and ſome of them ſhall ye ſcourge in your Synagogues, and perſecute them from City to City; that upon you may come all the righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth, from the Blood of righteous* Abel, *unto the Blood of* Zacharias, *Son of* Barachias, *whom ye ſlew between the Temple and the Altar*, Mat. xxiii. 34. And as it has been the Fate of Good Men and Holy Pro-

Prophets to be thus perſecuted; it has likewiſe been their conſtant manner patiently and cheerfully to ſuffer theſe Perſecutions. They never fled to the Arms of Reſiſtance, nor ſtudy'd Revenge; but thought it a great Honour and Happineſs to ſuffer for their Duty. So that the being of a Bloody, Perſecuting Spirit, is a Character appropriated to the Wicked of the World; but the Patient and Cheerful Bearing of Perſecution, is the Character of the Godly in all Ages. It is a great Comfort to be found in ſo good Company as that of *Moſes* and the Prophets, Chriſt and the Apoſtles. While we are in their Company, and are acted by their Spirit, and behave our ſelves as They did, we may comfortably aſſure our ſelves that we are in the right Way to Heaven; which to be aſſured of, is the greateſt Comfort upon Earth. So much for the Reaſons of the Duty. As to the Means for facilitating the Practice of it, I find, for want of Time, I muſt leave them to another Opportunity.

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SERMON XX.

MAT. V. 12.

Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: *For great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets, which were before you.*

The Sixth Sermon on this Text.

IN my laſt Diſcourſe, there were Two Things I obſerved from theſe Words.

I. A comfortable Direction when we ſuffer for Chriſt or our Duty. *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad.*

II. The

II. The Reaſons of that Direction, which are Two. One taken from the Great Reward which ſhall be beſtow'd upon ſuch Sufferers in Heaven; for *Great is your Reward in Heaven.* The other, from the Honourable Rank it gives them upon Earth, the Company of the Prophets. *For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets, which were before you.*

As to the *Firſt* of theſe, the Comfortable Direction given to Chriſtians, when they ſuffer for Chriſt, or their Duty, I propos'd to treat of it under theſe Three Heads.

1. To conſider the Nature and Importance of this Duty of Rejoycing, and being exceeding glad under the Croſs.

2. Becauſe this ſeems Difficult and Unnatural, I propoſed to enquire into the Grounds and Reaſons of the Duty; in order to recommend it to your Eſteem and Affection.

3. To point at the Ways and Means to facilitate the Practice of it.

Now having at that Time ſpoke to the *Firſt* and *Second* of theſe; namely, the Deſcription of the Duty, with the Reaſons to recommend it to your Study; I ſhall proceed now to the Ways and Means to facilitate the Practice of it; and then go on to the Two great Motives

tives in the Text, the Greatneſs of the Reward in Heaven, and the Uſage of the Prophets.

III. As to the Ways and Means to attain true Joy, it is a very Noble and Serious Study. For this Inward Joy and Cheerfulneſs is not to be procured, as Laughter and Noiſy Mirth, by breaking of Jeſts, by the Fumes of Wine and ſtrong Drink, by the Charms of Muſick or Luſt, no, nor by every piece of good Luck and Worldly Proſperity. This Vein of the fineſt Metal, like that of pure Gold, lies much deeper; even in upright Intentions towards God; in a Good Conſcience; in Pious Endeavours; in a Right Faith; in a Lively Hope; in a pure Charity; in a Firm Belief and Serious Contemplation of the Future State; in a Tranquillity of Mind, ſet above the Hopes and Fears of this World; in a Readineſs to die; and a Pleaſure in doing good: A State of Mind, in ſhort, which is not to be attained but by a confirmed Habit of Virtue and Goodneſs, not only External in the Sight of the World; but Internal in the Heart and Soul, which is properly the true Seat of Joy and Grief. *Light is ſown for the Righteous, and Gladneſs for the Upright in Heart*; ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* xcvii. 11. Even the Light of Nature hath taught ſome wiſe Heathens thus much of ſound Divinity. *Seneca* ſays, that True Joy is a very ſerious Buſineſs; *Severa res eſt verum gaudium*; Sen. Ep.

And

And enquiring into the Cauſes from whence it proceeds, and the Principles of which it is made up, he ſays it proceeds, *Ex bona conſcientia, ex honeſtis conſiliis, ex rectis actionibus, ex contemptu fortuitorum, ex placido vitæ & continuo tenore unam prementis viam.* That is, it proceeds from a Good Conſcience, from Upright Intentions, from Right Actions, from a Contempt of Misfortunes, and from a calm and ſteady Tenour of Life, keeping to one Courſe.

More particularly, that this Inward Peace and Joy, or Alacrity of Mind, is not to be attained in the Ways of Sin and Wickedneſs, is very plain both from Scripture and Reaſon. The Prophet *Iſaiah* compares the Wicked, in regard of their inward Perturbation, to a muddy troubled Sea caſting up Mire and Dirt. *But the wicked*, ſays he, *are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt. There is no Peace, ſaith my God, to the Wicked*, Iſ. lvii. 20. And right Reaſon will teach us the ſame Doctrine. Wicked Men are reduc'd to miſerable Shifts, to procure a little Inward Quiet; but all will not do. What Joy or Satisfaction can a Wicked Man have, who can't yet ſhake off the Belief of a God, in walking directly contrary to his Precepts, and to the Dictates of his own Conſcience, and under the fearful Apprehenſions of what is to follow after Death? And to think that a Man can be cured

cured of this, by hardening his Heart into Atheiſm or Infidelity, is juſt as if a Man, when he ſees a powerful Enemy coming upon him, ſhould wink hard, and pretend not to be afraid. But it is commonly found, that all this hardening of their Hearts will not do, unleſs by Drink and Luſt, Company and Buſineſs, they keep their Thoughts in ſuch a perpetual hurry, as to ſuppreſs every ſerious Thought, and ſo live the Life, and die the Death of the Beaſt that hath no Underſtanding.

And as this Alacrity is not to be attained in the ways of Sin, ſo neither is it to be attained by any low or imperfect Endeavours after Holineſs and Virtue. While a Man is wavering between God and his Duty, and not yet fixed in any ſettled good Habits, he is but in an Uncomfortable State. All Wavering, and Doubtfulneſs, and Uncertainty either of Reſolution or Endeavour, are great Enemies to this Alacrity; and conſequently the more a Man is guilty of any Sin, and the more he is under the Power of any evil Habit, ſo much the greater Stranger he is to this both Duty and Privilege of Inward Peace and Joy. And therefore, among other Things, this ſhould have great Weight with us to keep us from Sin, that every Sin puts us back ſo far in the Degree of our Spiritual Joy and Alacrity, which is a very Heaven upon Earth.

But

But to go on, and give you a more particular Account, what it is that occaſions this inward Joy, I ſhall briefly Obſerve it to you from the Holy Scriptures.

1. A lively Faith in Chriſt is attended with great Joy. *Let not your Heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe alſo in me,* Joh. xiv. 1. This is the great good News of the Goſpel, the News of a Saviour; the way of being reconciled to God; the Betaking our ſelves to the right Mediator between God and Man; the Believing all thoſe glorious Things, which Chriſt has promiſed in his Goſpel; and the believing them ſo as to comply with the Conditions, and ſeriouſly to ſet about a New Life, which is the Work of True Faith. This, I ſay, occaſions great Joy. So ſays St. *Peter* to the Chriſtians to whom he writes; *Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation, ready to be revealed in the laſt Time: Wherein,* ſays he, *ye greatly rejoyce, tho' now for a Seaſon, if need be, ye are in Heavineſs through manifold Temptations. That the Tryal of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that periſheth, though it be tryed with Fire, might be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of* Jeſus Chriſt: *Whom having not ſeen ye Love; in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory,* 1 Pet. i. 5.

2. The

2. The Keeping a Good Conſcience, is the way to this Inward Joy. *Our Rejoycing is this,* ſaith St. *Paul, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, That in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with Carnal Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Converſation in the World,* 2 Cor. i. 12. This is that *Merry Heart,* that *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *which hath a continual Feaſt,* Pro. xv. 15.

3. This Inward Joy is acquir'd by a faithful Diſcharge of Great and Difficult Duties, ſuch as Suffering reſolutely and patiently for the Name of Chriſt: By this means learning more perfectly the Virtues belonging to a State of Affliction. *My Brethren,* ſays St. *James, count it all Joy when ye fall into diverſe Temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your Faith worketh Patience. But let Patience have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing,* Jam. i. 2. So we find that *The Apoſtles departed from the Preſence of the Council, rejoycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for the Name of Chriſt,* Acts v. 41. So the holy Penman of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews,* commends the Chriſtians to whom he writes, for that *They took joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods, knowing that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring Subſtance,* Heb. x. 34. So St. *Paul* exhorts that we ſhould ſhew *Mercy,* that is, extend our Charity, *with Cheerfulneſs,* Rom. xii. 8. And ſo a Sublimity or Cheerfulneſs of Mind in a poor Chriſtian,

Chriſtian, and an Humility or Lowlineſs of Mind in a Rich one, being both very Eminent, but very Difficult Virtues, St. *James* exhorts Chriſtians to rejoice, or glory in them. For the Words, I think, if they were juſtly render'd, would run thus; *Let the Brother of low Degree glory in his Sublimity; but the Rich, in his Humility*, Jam. i. 9. Καυχάσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ. Ὁ δὲ πλούσιος, ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ. In general there is matter of Rejoycing, whenever we have atchieved any noble, difficult piece of Service in the way of Chriſtian Duty. And therefore there is no ſurer way to attain to this Alacrity of Mind, than couragiouſly to undergo all the Parts of the Chriſtian Warfare, and never to flinch from any Duty.

4. A Settled Inward Joy follows a Confirmed Sincerity or Chriſtian Perfection in Virtue. There is a Paſſage in St. *Paul's* Second Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, which, in the Original, I thus underſtand; *Finally, Brethren, rejoyce, be perfect, be of good Comfort*; 2. Cor. 13. 11. χαίρετε, καταρτίζεσθε, παρακαλεῖσθε, &c. From whence I would obſerve, that Rejoycing, and being of good Comfort, go along with being perfect. The ſame Doctrine I obſerved before from a Paſſage of the *Pſalmiſt's*, where he ſays, that *Light is ſown for the Righteous, and Joy for the Upright in Heart*, Pſal. xcvii. 11.

5. This Spiritual Joy, as proceeding from a true Love of God, is occaſioned by promoting the Work and Service of God, whether the Propagation of the Chriſtian Faith, or Chriſtians living up to their holy Profeſſion. *Firſt*, I ſay, good Men rejoyce when the Chriſtian Faith is propagated. Thus St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, obſerving ſome By-Ends ſome Men had in Preaching the Goſpel, and ſome particular Piques among themſelves, or againſt him, yet concludes thus, *Notwithſtanding every way, whether in Pretence, or in Truth, Chriſt is preached; and I therein do rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce*, Phil. 1. 18. Then they rejoyce rather more when Chriſtians adorn their Profeſſion with a Good Life. *I have no greater Joy*, ſaith St. *John*, *than to hear that my Children walk in Truth*, 3 Joh. 4. And St. *Paul* calls the *Philippians*, whom he repreſents as an excellent ſort of People, *His Joy and his Crown*, Phil. iv. 1. and ſays, *He thanks God upon every Remembrance of them, in all his Prayers making Requeſt with Joy, for their Fellowſhip in the Goſpel from the firſt Day* [of their receiving the Goſpel] *to that Time*, ch. i. 3.

6. *Laſtly*; This Inward Alacrity and Joy is occaſioned by a Near Proſpect of the Joys of Heaven. And therefore this Rejoycing is called *a Rejoycing in Hope*. St. *Paul* tells the *Romans*, that by Chriſt *We have Acceſs by Faith into this Grace, wherein we ſtand, and rejoyce in Hope*

Hope of the Glory of God, Rom. v. 2. And elſewhere we find the ſame Apoſtle Rejoycing mightily, upon the Proſpect of the Crown of Righteouſneſs, which was laid up for him after all his Labours; *I am now ready to be offered*, ſays he, *and the Time of my Departure is at hand*; *I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my Courſe, I have kept the Faith*: *Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, ſhall give me at that Day*, 2 Tim. iv. 6. And this, perhaps, may be one good Reaſon of the extraordinary Joy of the Martyrs, that they have ſo near a Proſpect of their Crown, there being nothing to interveen to diſappoint them of it.

From all which we may gather, that the beſt Way to attain this Alacrity and Cheerfulneſs of Mind is, by having a Lively Faith in Chriſt; by Keeping a Good Conſcience; by faithfully Diſcharging all the moſt Difficult Duties; by preſſing on towards higher and higher Meaſures of Chriſtian Perfection; and by doing what we can towards the Propagation of Faith and good Life in the World; and by taking a near Proſpect of Glory and Immortality, and putting our ſelves in the beſt Preparation and Diſpoſition for it; all which do concur in this patient and joyful Suffering to Martyrdom. And being in ſo good Diſpo-

ſition, we ſhall with Joy wait for the coming of our Lord, and cheerfully go forth and meet him.

So much for the Ways and Means to facilitate this Duty of Rejoycing under the Croſs.

I proceed next to a more particular Conſideration of the two great Motives to this Duty in the Text; the Greatneſs of their Reward in Heaven, and the Uſage of the Prophets.

To begin with the *Firſt*, the Greatneſs of their Reward; for *Great is your Reward in Heaven.* In ſpeaking to which, there are theſe Two Things will deſerve to be conſider'd.

1. How there comes to be any *Reward in Heaven* of our imperfect, and very undeſerving Services here upon Earth?

2. Why it is ſaid, with a particular Emphaſis, that *Great is their Reward in Heaven?*

1. It may be asked with good Reaſon, how there comes to be any Encouragement in Heaven for our poor Services here upon Earth? Eſpecially it is very ſtrange that this Encouragement ſhould go by the Name of *Reward*, as if there were any Equality between it and the Service. I ſhall briefly anſwer both theſe Queſtions, before I come to the principal Thing in this Promiſe, the Greatneſs of the Reward.

As to the *Firſt*, Conſidering the great Imperfection of our Services, (the very Beſt of them,) and

and the preſent Bleſſings annexed to thoſe Services in an Inward Peace and Tranquillity, and the Satisfaction of our own Minds and Conſciences, we may well think them amply enough Rewarded, tho' there were no further Retribution in Reverſion. And indeed I think it muſt be put upon the infinite Goodneſs and Mercy of God, and not any thing of our Deſerts, that there are further Rewards (eſpecially ſuch Glorious ones) of our poor Services in the World to come. And ſince there are ſuch, it was highly Congruous that our Saviour ſhould acquaint his Diſciples with them; more eſpecially conſidering the preſent Occaſion and Circumſtances. For in the foregoing part of this Sermon, he had cut off his Diſciples from all their Worldly Hopes of an Earthly Kingdom; diſappointing them in their Expectations of Wealth and Honour, Carnal Pleaſure and Revenge; ſhewing them the Neceſſity of Juſtice, Mercifulneſs, Inward Purity, Peaceableneſs and Patience. He had likewiſe foretold what hard Fate his Diſciples ſhould have in the World; that *Men ſhould revile them, and perſecute them, and ſay all manner of Evil againſt them falſly for his ſake.* And therefore there could be nothing more proper, or more ſeaſonable, than to comfort them with thoſe Glorious Promiſes relating to his Heavenly Kingdom; by opening this Great Secret, that this Preſent Life is only a

State of Probation for a Better, and that the Happineſs he deſign'd for them was not an Earthly, but an Heavenly Happineſs. But more particularly to give an Account of this Point, and to ſhew the Neceſſity of the Promiſe of a Reward in Heaven, let the following Particulars be conſider'd, which Time will not allow me to enlarge upon.

1. Let it be conſider'd, that this is a more Expreſs Promiſe of the Happineſs of Heaven than any that went before; for tho' the Encouragement annexed to Two of the Beatitudes be, *For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; and to another, that *they ſhall ſee God*; and to another, that *they ſhall be called the Children of God*; and to another, that *they ſhall be filled*; yet all theſe are capable of other ſound Interpretations, tho' the Happineſs of Heaven ſhould not be in them expreſsly promiſed. For the Phraſe of the Kingdom of Heaven, that Theirs is that Kingdom, moſt commonly ſignifies no more but that ſuch and ſuch Perſons are fitteſt for the Evangelical State, or to be Chriſt's Diſciples, or to be Members of his Kingdom, without as yet determining what the Nature of that Kingdom was. And all the other Expreſſions are very capable of being interpreted in a ſound Senſe of Mercies Spiritual and Temporal, beſtow'd in this Life; without Excluding the other of Heavenly Happineſs. But this Promiſe of a

Great

Great Reward in Heaven is ſo home and expreſs, that it muſt ſignify the Heavenly Felicity, and that only.

2. Let it be conſider'd, that Man being made up of a Mortal Body and an Immortal Soul, it is not poſſible that he could ever be compleatly Happy by all the Bleſſings of this Life, were they ever ſo great, without an Happineſs of Eternal Duration. *What would it profit a Man, if he ſhould gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* Mar. viii. 36. The Bleſſings of the Future State, if they were no greater in Degree, (as they moſt certainly are) yet would be infinitely more valuable, upon Account of their Eternal Duration.

3. Let it be conſider'd, that there is no ſuch perfect Enjoyment of God in this World, but that we are ſtill Capable of much Higher Degrees of that Enjoyment, than the Neceſſities, and Cares, and Troubles, and Pains, and Sickneſſes incident to Body and Mind, will permit us to be Capable of here.

4. Let it be Conſider'd, that the Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments in this World is very Unequal; and therefore that it is highly Neceſſary that there be Another State of Rewards and Puniſhments appointed after this Life, in which God's Providence ſhall be vindicated, and Good Men rewarded, and Wicked Men puniſhed.

5. Let it be conſider'd, that the Great Principle our Saviour recommended, was that of Faith; and that Faith is the *Subſtance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not ſeen,* Heb. xi. 1. It would then have been very Prepoſterous in our Lord, and very unſuitable to this Principle of Faith, to have beſtow'd upon us only preſent Bleſſings.

6. Let it be conſider'd, that the great Aim and Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, is to wean our Hearts from the World, and to raiſe them to Heaven. Now nothing could have been more inconſiſtent with this Deſign, than to propoſe to us only Temporal Promiſes. For, as our Hopes and Aims are, ſo will be our Endeavours and Performances.

7. Let it be conſider'd, that as the Difficulties of Obedience and Patience are very great, it requires a Strong Conſolation of an Eternal Happineſs to wade through them; that ſo *For the Joy ſet before us, we may endure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the Shame,* Heb. xii. 2.

8. *Laſtly*; As to the Queſtion, Whether Virtue is not a ſufficient Reward to its ſelf in this World? Suppoſe it were; This Reward is but Secret: Vice often triumphs in Publick; and it would be too great an Encouragement to it, if there were not a more Publick, as well as a more Real State of Retribution. The preſent Contentment which attends Good Actions,

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is an Argument that there is a Wiſe and Good God who has ſo order'd Matters, that Virtue has always ſome Happineſs, and Vice ſome Miſery annexed. But that is more like an Earneſt Penny, than a Full Reward. The infinite Publick Diſorders of Mankind require a more Publick Vindication of Juſtice, than is uſually to be ſeen in this Lower World.

So much for the Account of this Matter, why it is neceſſary that there ſhould be a Retribution in Heaven.

But then, why muſt this Retribution be called a Reward, as if it bore any Proportion to our mean Services, as Wages does to Labour? To this there is a very proper Anſwer, by diſtinguiſhing between a Reward of Debt, where the Reward is ſtrictly due, as an Equivalent for the Service; and a Reward of Grace or Favour, where the Generoſity and Bounty of the Rewarder gives much more than the Service deſerves. This is St. *Paul*'s Diſtinction; *Now to him that worketh*, ſays he, *is the Reward not reckon'd of Grace, but of Debt*, Rom. iv. 4. But this Reward in Heaven is a Reward of Grace, there being infinitely more of Bounty in it than Deſert. For, *Firſt*, it proceeds from the Goodneſs of God, and is called his Gift. *The Wages of Sin is Death*, ſays St. *Paul*, *but the Gift of God is Eternal Life, through* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord*, Rom. vi. 23. *Then* it is the Purchaſe not of

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our Righteouſneſs, but of the Merits and Performances of Chriſt. *He hath made us accepted,* ſays the Apoſtle, *in the Beloved,* Eph. i. 6. It is for his ſake that our imperfect Services are ſo highly rewarded. And *laſtly,* this Reward is owing to the Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Goodneſs of God. To his Wiſdom, that he has thought fit, for the better Government of Mankind, to propoſe ſuch a Noble Reward: To his Juſtice, that he is exactly and punctually True to his Word: And to his Mercy, that he did not take the Forfeiture of our Original and Actual Guilt, but graciouſly contriv'd this way of Saving us by a Redeemer, upon very Small and Diſproportion'd Services of our Own. So much for the Word *Reward.*

The *laſt* Thing to be conſider'd in this Expreſſion, is the Greatneſs of the Reward to thoſe Sufferers for Chriſt and their Duty. *Great is your Reward in Heaven.* In which there are Two Things will fall in properly to be diſcuſſed. 1. Whether there is any Difference in the Degrees of Rewards in Heaven, ſo that One may be really ſaid to be Greater than Another? 2. Why a Great Reward is promiſed and given to them who ſuffer patiently for Chriſt and their Duty? But theſe are Two Points of that Importance, that I can't expect to be able to handle them to any purpoſe now

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in the End of a Sermon. And therefore I ſhall chooſe to refer them to another Opportunity.

Now God follow with his Bleſſing what ye have heard, and give you a right Underſtanding in all Things.

To this Great God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be all Praiſe, *&c.*

SER-

SERMON XXI.

MAT. V. 12.

Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: For great is your Reward in Heaven:—

The Seventh Sermon on this Text.

HAving consider'd the Comfortable Direction in these Words of *Rejoycing, and being exceeding glad,* when we have the Honour to Suffer for Christ, or our Duty; I proceeded to the Consideration of the Reasons wherewith it is here enforced; the Greatness of

of the Reward in Heaven, and the Example of the Prophets.

As to the *Firſt*, the *Greatneſs of the Reward in Heaven*; upon this I have already accounted for the Reaſonableneſs of a Reward in Heaven for our imperfect Services here upon Earth; and intend to go on now both to conſider the Circumſtance of the *Greatneſs of this Reward*; and why it is particularly promis'd to Confeſſors and Martyrs; for ſuch are they who ſuffer for Chriſt and their Duty.

I. To begin with the *Firſt*; *The Greatneſs of the Reward in Heaven*, provided for them who ſuffer for Chriſt. *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: For great is your Reward in Heaven.* Theſe Words may either be underſtood concerning the Heavenly Felicity in general; as if our Lord had ſaid, *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for ye ſhall have Heaven for your Reward*; or it may be underſtood as a Promiſe of an High Degree of Glory in Heaven; as if he had ſaid, *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for proportionably to your great Sufferings for Chriſt, and your Duty upon Earth, your Reward ſhall be ſo much the greater in Heaven.* It is this laſt, which ſeems to me to be the proper Scope and Meaning in this Place, chiefly for the following Reaſons; 1. Becauſe we have hitherto ſeen that the Promiſe annexed to each Beatitude has been ſomething peculiarly adapted and ſuited to it, and riſing indeed out of it.

it. Now to whom can the Greatneſs of the Reward more peculiarly belong, than to them who undergo the Greateſt and moſt Difficult Duties, ſuch as that of Confeſſors and Martyrs is? 2. The Expreſſion not only points at Heaven as the Place and State, repreſenting to us the Heavenly Felicity, but at an High Degree of Felicity in that State; it is not only ſaid, *Your Reward is in Heaven*; but *Great is your Reward in Heaven.* 3. The Compariſon with the Prophets, which immediately follows, favours this Senſe; *So perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* It is true, the Compariſon runs upon the Likeneſs of their Sufferings; but if the Sufferings are equal, why not the Rewards? Now we find the Reward of a Prophet is elſewhere expreſsly diſtinguiſh'd from the Reward of an ordinary Good or Righteous Man, and ſet above it. It is a very remarkable Paſſage in the Tenth Chapter of this Goſpel, and deſerves to be particularly conſider'd, upon Occaſion of this Subject; *He that receiveth a Prophet*, ſaith our Saviour, *in the Name of a Prophet, ſhall receive a Prophet's Reward; and he that receiveth a righteous Man, in the Name of a righteous Man, ſhall receive a righteous Man's Reward. And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his Reward*, Mat. x. 41. Where there

there ſeem to be Three ſeveral Degrees of Hoſpitality recommended, and as many Degrees of Rewards deſcribed and promiſed. The Firſt, and the Higheſt, is the Reception and Entertainment of a Prophet, which in Times of Perſecution, (their uſual Lot) was attended with a great deal of Danger. And to this is promiſed *A Prophet's Reward*; which is an eminent Place in Glory. So we are told in the Prophecy of *Daniel*, that *They who are wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3. The Second is the Reception and Entertainment of any Good Man, which, as it was not attended with ſo great Danger, ſo a leſs Reward, called *A Righteous Man's Reward*, is promiſed to it. And the Third is the leaſt of all, the giving a Cup of cold Water to any Private Chriſtian, which our Saviour tells us, ſhall likewiſe be conſider'd, and *not loſe its Reward*.

Taking the Words then in this Senſe, there are theſe Two Things will require to be accounted for from them.

1. That there are Different Degrees of Rewards in Heaven.

2. Why ſuch an High Degree of Reward is promiſed to them, who ſuffer for Chriſt.

1. *Firſt*;

I. *First*; The Words import, that there are Different Degrees of Rewards in Heaven. *Great is your Reward in Heaven.* Now this being a Doctrine, the Truth of which is diſputed by ſome Divines, I ſhall firſt briefly prove it from Scripture and Reaſon; and then endeavour to make ſome good Uſe of it, for our Edification.

As for Scripture Light in this particular, there are theſe few Things I would offer to your Conſideration. 1. The Parable of the Pounds, *Luk.* xix. 12. in which we may Obſerve, that the Reward of the ſeveral Servants is proportion'd to their various Improvements of the Money entruſted with them. To him that with his Pound had gained Ten Pounds, Authority was given over Ten Cities; and to him whoſe Pound had gained Five Pounds, Authority is given over Five Cities. And leſt it ſhould be alledged, that the Rewards pointed at in that Parable, are to be underſtood only of the ſeveral Meaſures of Grace, which are encreaſed according to our greater or leſſer Improvements of them, this may be cleared from the Parable of the Talents, *Mat.* xxv. where it is plain, the Proceedings there deſcribed relate to the Day of Judgment; and the Words, *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*, do plainly point at Everlaſting Happineſs; as

theſe

theſe other Words, *Caſt ye the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*; do point at Hell-Torments. 2. Another Paſſage of Scripture, countenancing this Doctrine, is that of St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* ix. 6. where, exhorting the *Corinthians* to a Bountiful Charity, he uſeth theſe Words; *But this, I ſay, he who ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly; and he who ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully.* Which Expreſſions do plainly point at a more or leſs plentiful Harveſt, according to our Greater or Leſſer Degrees of Diligence in doing good. 3. It is plain from Scripture, that there will be Different Degrees of Puniſhment; and then why not likewiſe Different Degrees of Rewards in the Future State? Our Saviour acquaints the Cities, wherein moſt of his mighty Works were done, that as their Sin was greater, ſo their Puniſhment ſhould be more intolerable than that of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and even *Sodom* it ſelf. *Wo unto thee Chorazin: Wo unto thee Bethſaida: For if the mighty Works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and Aſhes. But I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, ſhalt be brought down to Hell: For if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in* Sodom, *it would have remained until this Day.*

But I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom *in the Day of Judgment, than for thee*, Mat. xi. 20. Now by the Rule of Contraries, as Higher Degrees of Sin ſhall be more grievouſly puniſhed, ſo Higher Degrees of Virtue ſhall be more amply rewarded. 4. I obſerve, when the Future Reward in Holy Scripture is promis'd, with the Addition of Words importing the extraordinary Greatneſs of it, it is commonly annex'd to very difficult Duties, and extraordinary Services; ſuch as Great Labours in the Work of the Goſpel, Martyrdom, Innocence, Love of Enemies, Great Charities, and the like; as by the following Paſſages may appear. *Love your Enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your Reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the Children of the Higheſt*, Luk. vi. 35. *Give, and it ſhall be given unto you, good Meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over ſhall be given into your Boſom*, Luke vi. 38. *Lo a great Multitude, which no Man could number, of all Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues, ſtood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands.* And afterwards, Rev. vii. 9. it is explain'd, that *They who were arrayed in white Robes, are ſuch as came out of great Tribulation, and have waſhed their Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the Throne of God*, V. 14. And elſewhere, *They who ſung the*

new

new Song before the Throne, are deſcribed to be *ſuch as were not defiled with Women*; *and ſuch in whoſe Mouth there was no Guile*, Rev. xiv. 3. To which we may add what St. *Peter* ſays, *Rejoyce in as much as ye are Partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings, that when his Glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding Joy*, 1 Pet. iv. 13.

And Right Reaſon is as conſonant to Scripture in this as in other Matters. For, 1. Since there are Degrees of Grace and Virtue ſo vaſtly different; why not likewiſe of Rewards in Glory? Is it reaſonable that he who has taken but an ordinary Care in this Spiritual Negotiation, ſhould be equal'd with him who has uſed double Diligence? For tho' the Reward of all is far above what any one deſerves, and is of Grace, not of Debt, yet God is pleaſed, both in the Diſpenſation of his Graces here, and in Conferring his Rewards hereafter, to ſet to himſelf ſome Rules of Juſtice and Equity, as well as of Goodneſs and Mercy; ſo that if a Man abounds ever ſo much in the Works of the Lord, yet none of his Labour ſhall be in vain, or ſuperfluous; 1 *Cor.* xv. 58. And tho' our Services are ever ſo inconſiderable; tho', as St. *Paul* ſays, *Neither is he that planteth any Thing, neither he that watereth*, yet, as he there tells us, *every Man ſhall receive his own Reward, according to his own Labour*; 1 Cor. iii. 7. Words, than which I think none can be more

expreſs for a particular Reward in Glory, ſuited to every one's Graces and Virtues. And ſo in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, he gives us to underſtand, that *Whatſoever good Thing any Man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord*, Eph. vi. 8. 2. The Nature of the Divine Juſtice ſeems to require this; for otherwiſe there would be only Encouragement for us to endeavour to get into the loweſt Claſs and Form of Saints; but not to Grow in Grace, and in every good Work: Whereas we are encourag'd to *leave the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and to go on to Perfection*; Heb. vi. 1. and are aſſured, that *God is not unrighteous, to forget our Work and Labour of Love, which we ſhew toward his Name, in Miniſtring to the Saints.* And we are exhorted, *Every one of us to ſhew the ſame Diligence to the full Aſſurance of Hope unto the End, and that we be not ſlothful, but Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes*, at the 10, 11 and 12 Verſes. Certainly every Man's Reaſon approves of this Doctrine in other Things. *David* had many Men in his Armies, who being all true to him, deſerv'd to be rewarded. But there were ſome who diſtinguiſh'd themſelves by their extraordinary Merits and Services, that were called *David's Mighty Men*, whom he preferr'd to the greateſt Offices. We have a Catalogue of them, 2 *Sam.* ch. xxiii. Now would any one think it juſt that theſe Great Men

ſhould

ſhould meet with no better Reward of their Services than the meaneſt Common Soldier that had been true to his Prince? And by the ſame way of Arguing, I can't much doubt, for my part, but that there will be very Conſiderable Differences made in Glory, according to the Different Degrees of Zeal and Diligence we employ here in God's Service. I can't believe, for Example, that an Old Sinner, who has ſpent his Youth and the chief part of his Life in the Service of his Luſts; tho' he ſhould come to himſelf in his Old Age, and take up, and heartily repent and amend, and ſo for Chriſt's ſake ſhould obtain Pardon of his Sins, and die well, and get to Heaven at laſt; I do not believe, I ſay, that ſuch a one will be preferr'd to as High a Degree in Glory, as if he had devoted his whole Life diligently to God's Service. Nor can I believe that every Honeſt Chriſtian will attain to the ſame Eminent Degrees of Glory with Confeſſors and Martyrs; nor that every ordinary good Miniſter ſhall arrive at the ſame Degrees of Glory and Felicity with the Apoſtles, thoſe noble Heroes of Chriſtianity, of whom our Saviour acquaints us, that *They ſhall ſit on Twelve Thrones, Judging the Twelve Tribes of* Iſrael, *Mat.* xix. 28. 3. The Capacities and Diſpoſitions of ſome being vaſtly enlarged beyond thoſe of others, it is but conſonant to Reaſon, that Higher Degrees of

Glory and Felicity ſhould be beſtowed on them, who have the higher Capacities and Diſpoſitions for it. Thus we are told of the hundred forty and four thouſand choice Perſons, who had the Father's Name written in their Foreheads, that *They ſung a new Song before the Throne; and that no Man could learn that Song but they*, Rev. xiv. 1. Now that by that Number are not to be underſtood the whole Company of the Bleſſed in Heaven, appears by the Characters and Deſcriptions which are there given of them; namely, that *They are ſuch as were not defiled with Women, for they are Virgins*; ſuch likewiſe *as follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth; and that in their Mouth was found no Guile, for that they are without fault before the Throne of God, ver.* 4, 5.

There are two or three Objections againſt this Doctrine, concerning the Different Degrees of Glory in Heaven, which it will be neceſſary to conſider, before we come to the Uſe and Improvement of it.

1. One is taken from the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, *Mat.* xx. where they that were called lateſt at the eleventh Hour, and ſo wrought but one Hour, received every Man his Peny, which was as much as was given to the others, who had born the Burthen and Heat of the Day. From whence ſome conclude, that in Heaven there will be no Regard to the Services done; but that it will be the Plea-

Pleaſure of the Great Landlord to beſtow his Rewards upon all his Labourers alike. But for Anſwer, I ſay this Objection is founded on a Miſtake concerning the true Scope and Deſign of that Parable, which doth not aim at repreſenting the State of the Church from the Beginning to the End of the World; or the final Rewards which ſhall be beſtow'd on Believers at the laſt Day: But only to deſcribe a much ſhorter Period of Time, namely, the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Calling of the Gentiles; as appears from the *Probandum*, which our Saviour there mentions, both in the Beginning and at the End of that Parable; namely, that *The Firſt ſhall be Laſt, and the Laſt Firſt.* The Peny then there ſpoke of, is the Goſpel Privileges, which were equally beſtow'd on *Jew* and *Gentile*, and which occaſion'd a great Murmuring among the *Jewiſh* Chriſtians, that they ſhould be communicated to the Gentiles at all. And therefore this Parable is no way pertinent to the Buſineſs now under our Conſideration, the Peny not being the Heavenly Reward; unleſs we will ſay that ſome, after receiving the Heavenly Reward, ſhall be unſatisfy'd with it, and expect more, and after all that, ſhall be diſmiſs'd from the Service: *Go thy way*, &c. as it follows there in the Parable. Thus, if it be well conſider'd, it will be found that the Equal Degrees of Glory, as well as

the relying on a Death-bed Repentance, which are encourag'd from the Miſunderſtanding of that Parable, are both built on a wrong Foundation.

2. Another Objection againſt this Doctrine, is taken from the All-Sufficiency of the Merits of Chriſt, which, as they alledge, are equally apply'd to all that have any Intereſt therein. To this it may be eaſily anſwer'd, that if the Merits of Chriſt are conſider'd in themſelves, according to their own Worth and Dignity, and without the Goſpel Terms and Conditions, by which we come to have any Intereſt in them, no doubt they are ſufficient to purchaſe the Higheſt Degree of Felicity, not only to all that ſhall be ſaved, but likewiſe to all that periſh. But the Efficacy of Chriſt's Merits, as to us, depends upon certain Conditions; and by thoſe Conditions, the Degrees of Glory depend upon the Degrees of Faith and New Obedience; which being vaſtly different, it remains that the Degrees of Glory will be ſo too.

3. A third Objection againſt this Doctrine is, that it ſems to be a Diſcouragement to ordinary Believers, who can expect to arrive only at the Lower Degrees of Glory, and that it will be ſome Abatement of their Felicity to ſee others conſtituted in Superiour Degrees of Happineſs. But this is eaſily anſwer'd; For, 1. We are to ſuppoſe that every one in Glory will

will have a Fulneſs of Satisfaction, according to their ſeveral Diſpoſitions and Capacities, and therefore that a Leſſer Degree of Glory will make no Abatement of Happineſs; as if we fill larger and leſſer Veſſels out of a great River, they will be all equally full, tho' one contains much more than another. 2. There will be ſuch a perfect Reſignation to the Will of God, that whatever Degrees of Glory he appoints, they will all perfectly acquieſce in, and be ſatisfy'd with; as knowing that God will beſtow the Honours in Heaven by the exacteſt Rules of Juſtice and Equity. *To ſit on my Right Hand, and on my Left, in my Kingdom, is not mine to give; but it ſhall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father*, ſays our Saviour, *Mat.* XX. 23. 3. I can't ſee the Conſequence, that Inequality of Degrees of Glory and Happineſs ſhould make any Uneaſineſs; or that Levelling, which makes Confuſion upon Earth, would be the Occaſion of Satisfaction in Heaven. The Angels in Glory, we all own, are exceeding Happy; yet there are great Degrees and Prerogatives of Honour and Glory among them. We hear of Angels and Arch-Angels, of Thrones and Dominions, of Principalities and Powers. Why then ſhould it be thought any Diminution of the Glory of the Saints, to have others advanced to any Degree of Glory above them? For Happineſs and

and Contentment are not reſtrain'd only to the Supreme Degree of Dignity; except we believe that we ſhall carry Pride and Ambition along with us to Heaven, which, I confeſs, would make us Unhappy even there.

So much for Eſtabliſhing the Doctrine of the Different Degrees of Glory in Heaven. We are, in the laſt place, to conſider of what Uſe and Importance it is in a Chriſtian Life. And indeed the Uſe of it is Plain and Obvious, to encourage us to grow in Grace, and always to abound in the Work of the Lord; foraſmuch as we know that our Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. Alas, we live in an Age, in which not only Wicked Men abound in all manner of Wickedneſs, but Good Men likewiſe are very barren in good Works. We have forgotten almoſt what it is to *lay up Treaſures in Heaven.* We think it very well, if we abſtain from Groſs Vices, and do not *run with others to the ſame Exceſs of Riot.* But for any great Fruitfulneſs in good Works, I doubt there is but little of it in our Thoughts and Study; and I am ſure very little there is to be ſeen in our Lives and Converſations. If one may apply what our Saviour ſays of the Three ſorts of Servants entruſted with their Lord's Talents, to the ſeveral Ages of the Church, we may ſay, I think, that the Apoſtles with their Talent gained Ten, by their unweary'd

weary'd Diligence and Induſtry in their Maſter's Service; and that the Primitive Fathers of the Church did ſo improve their Talents, that with One they gained Five; But in theſe Latter Ages, we are ſo barren in all manner of Goodneſs, that we are like that lazy, ſaucy Servant, who hid his Lord's Talent in a Napkin, and pretended too to Juſtify and Excuſe it. And indeed I am Apprehenſive, that by our Unwary Confutation of the *Popiſh* Errors concerning Merit and Supererrogation, we have too much depretiated Good Works themſelves; whereas it is moſt certain, they ought to be highly had in Eſtimation, not only as the Genuine Signs and Fruits of a Lively Faith, but as Neceſſary Conditions of Salvation; and not only of Salvation, but of our Growth in Grace, and our Advancement to Higher Degrees of Glory. If Men did ſeriouſly believe, that not only every Good Perſon, but likewiſe every Good Action, ſhall have its due Recompence of Reward; and that all the Good we do here, is like good Seed ſown in fertile Ground, or like Money put into a Profitable Thriving Bank; and that it will produce a rich Income and Increaſe in Glory; that as the Apoſtle ſaith, *It is Fruit that will abound to our Account*, Phil. iv. 17. that *So ſoon as we reſt from our Labours, our good Works ſhall follow us*, Rev. xiv. 13. they would not be ſparing in laying

ing out on ſo good an Account; but would be continually pouring into this Bank, and would think they could never Do or Suffer too much for Chriſt, when the very leaſt Service performed to Him, even the giving a Cup of cold Water to any Chriſtian for his ſake, is not to go without its Reward. This would lead me to,

II. The *Second* Thing I propoſed to conſider from this part of the Words; namely, Why this great Reward is ſo particularly promis'd to them that ſuffer for Chriſt? why annexed to this more than to any other of the Beatitudes? But becauſe this is a Subject, which will require a more particular Conſideration, than that it is fit to attempt it in the End of a Sermon, I ſhall refer it to another Opportunity; praying God to follow what we have heard with his Bleſſing, that it may bring forth Fruit to his Glory, and our Edification and Salvation, through *Jeſus Chriſt*. To whom, &c.

SER-

SERMON XXII.

MAT. V. 12.

Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad: *For great is your Reward in Heaven: For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets, which were before you.*

The Eighth Sermon on this Text.

AFTER I had ſpoken to the Comfortable Direction here given to thoſe who ſuffer for Chriſt, and their Duty, that they ſhould rejoyce, and be exceeding glad; I came to conſider the Two Reaſons annexed, the One taken from the Greatneſs of the Reward prepared for ſuch Sufferers

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in Heaven; and the other from the like Uſage of the Prophets who went before them.

In ſpeaking to the Firſt of theſe, the *Greatneſs of their Reward in Heaven*; after Interpreting it in this Senſe, as if our Saviour had ſaid, "Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for proportionably to your greater Sufferings upon ſo good "an Account here on Earth, your Reward ſhall "be ſo much the greater in Heaven:" There were Two Things I propos'd to account for from the Words explain'd in that Senſe.

1. That there are different Degrees of Rewards in Heaven.

2. Why ſuch an High Degree of Reward is promis'd to them who ſuffer for Chriſt?

Now having at the laſt Occaſion conſider'd the *Firſt* of theſe, namely, the Different Degrees of Rewards in Heaven; I ſhall proceed now to the *Second*, and conſider why ſuch an High Degree of Reward is promis'd to them that Suffer for Chriſt? Which, together with the Example of the Prophets, is all that remains now to be Conſider'd from this Text.

This Doctrine then, as I conceive, may be accounted for on theſe Two Conſiderations; the Perſon of Chriſt, on whoſe Account they ſuffer;

fer; and the Excellency of the Act of Patient, Reſolute Suffering.

I. *Firſt*, If we conſider the Perſon of Chriſt, on whoſe Account they ſuffer, it is moſt ſuitable to his Honour, that they who ſuffer on his Account ſhould be admitted to a Great and Diſtinguiſhing Reward in Heaven. Rewards are diſpenſed, as upon other Conſiderations, ſo particularly according to the Dignity and Generoſity of the Perſon to whom the Service is perform'd. The ſame Service done to a mean Man, perhaps is no way rewarded at all, but with Thanks; which, if done to a Prince, would be rewarded with great Honour and Profit. And the Reaſon is, Becauſe every Perſon of Honour thinks himſelf oblig'd to requite Services according to his Quality and Ability; eſpecially, if thoſe Services have this Obliging Circumſtance to recommend them, that they are done to a Diſtreſſed Prince in his Low and Afflicted Circumſtances, while he is grievouſly Affronted and Perſecuted by Others. All this enhaunces the Obligation; and if he is a Prince of a grateful, generous Temper, he will reward all ſuch Kindneſſes ſo much the more, when he is in a Condition to do it, and comes to his Kingdom. Now to apply this to the preſent Caſe, we muſt remember that the Suffering we now ſpeak of is for Chriſt's ſake, as we are told at the preceeding Verſe; *Bleſſed are ye*

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when Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake, Mat. v. 11. In which Deſcription of the Service, we may ſee a plain Foundation laid for the Greatneſs of the Reward; for, 1. In the Service there is *Suffering*, which is a much Higher Degree of Service than *Acting*. Many have the Courage to Act for a Perſon, who have not the Courage to Suffer for him. 2. In the Service there is not one Act, or one ſort of Suffering only mentioned, but a great Variety thereof; *Reviling, Perſecuting, and all manner of evil ſpeaking*; and theſe not from one, but many; *When Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you.* 3. In the Service, the Innocency of the Sufferer is taken notice of. The Revilings and evil Speakings are ſaid to be *falſe*; and the other Sufferings not to be for their Own Evil Deeds and Demerits, but purely upon Chriſt's Account, *for my ſake.* This is the Noble Conſideration, which gives a Value to all the reſt. And indeed, putting all theſe together, it amounts to an high Degree of Chriſtian Virtue, conſequently of Reward in Heaven. For, if it is highly equitable that whoever Acts in any Good Cauſe upon Earth, ſhould be rewarded in Heaven, then much more he that ſuffers in a Good Cauſe. If it is reaſonable that every the ſmalleſt Suffering in a Good Cauſe ſhould be rewarded; even the daily Acts of Self-denial and

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Bearing the Croſs; much more the greater Sufferings in Honour, Eſtate, and Life. If the Sufferings of a Man, in other reſpects no very good Man, would yet be valued, and rewarded, much more the Sufferings of a Good Man, who ſuffers purely on a Good Account. *Laſtly*, If Suffering for one's Prince in his Low and Unfortunate Circumſtances, would be reckon'd highly Meritorious, ſo that the Prince, when he comes to his Kingdom, would reckon himſelf obliged generouſly to recompence it; how much more ſhall our Suffering for a Perſecuted, Crucified Chriſt, be highly rewarded by him in his Heavenly Kingdom? Eſpecially, if we conſider, that all this Arguing from the Example of Earthly Princes holds *a Fortiori* in this Caſe of Suffering for Chriſt. For, a Man may do, or ſuffer ſeveral Things in the Service of an Earthly Prince, and yet that Prince (who ſees and hears by other Mens Eyes and Ears) may know nothing of it. Other People may run away with the Praiſe and Reward of the Good Action; when the Prince himſelf, through Miſrepreſentation, miſtakes the true Author. Sometimes, there are ſo many Perſons who have merited well of an Earthly Prince, that it is not really in his Power to Reward them all, even when he comes to his Kingdom. And frequently Good Services are forgotten, for want of a due Meaſure of

Gratitude and Generoſity in Princes themſelves, their Thoughts being taken up with a Multitude of other Cares and Concerns. And if none of theſe happens to be the Caſe, the Prince, for whom the Service was perform'd, may be taken off by Death, before he has rewarded it; and there may happen to ſucceed another *Pharaoh* that knew not *Joſeph*, who, inſtead of proving a Friend to the Perſon who merited of his Predeceſſor, may prove his Mortal Enemy: So that the *Pſalmiſt* might very well ſay, *Put not your Truſt in Princes, nor in the Son of Man, in whom there is no Help; his Breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth; in that very Day his Thoughts periſh*; Pſal. cxlvi. 3. But there is no Fear of any of theſe Diſappointments to them, who do any Service, or undergo any Suffering for Chriſt. For, 1. There is no Service, tho' ever ſo Secret, can eſcape his Eye and Knowledge: *And He that ſeeth it in ſecret, will reward it openly*, Mat. vi. 4. Nor, 2. Is there any Want of Places, Rewards, or Preferments, ſuited to every one's Good Actions and Sufferings, in the Court of Heaven. Chriſt is not a Poor Prince, who has but One Bleſſing, or a few Places in his Gift; *In his Father's Houſe are many Manſions*, Joh. xiv. 2. (that is, good Places and Settlements;) and he is gone to prepare a Place for all his Faithful Servants. And as he is gone, he will come again, and receive them to himſelf,

himſelf, that where he is, they may be alſo. Nor, 3. Is there any Fear that Faithful Services will be either Overlook'd by him, or Forgot and paſt by without their Due Reward: For, as the Apoſtle ſays, *God is not unrighteous to forget our Work and Labour of Love, which we ſhew toward his Name*, Heb. vi. 10. Generoſity is ſo infinitely Perfect in God beyond what it is in Men, that there is really no Compariſon. There is not the very leaſt Service can be perform'd to Chriſt, not ſo much as the Giving a Cup of Cold Water to any that belongs to him, or upon his Account, that ſhall not meet with a due Recompence of Reward. Nor, *Laſtly*, Is there any Fear that he, to whom our Services are performed, can ever fail by Death; for, as the Apoſtle tells us, *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt them that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them*, Heb. vii. 25. So that it is very plain, I think, that the Conſideration of the Perſon, on whoſe Account we ſuffer, is one great Ground of the Reward; the Ample Reward promis'd to them who ſuffer for Chriſt's ſake.

II. But, *Secondly*, If we conſider the Act it ſelf of Suffering for Chriſt, we may obſerve ſeveral Things in it, which will account for a particular High Reward in Glory to ſuch Sufferers; the Act of Suffering for Chriſt being the moſt Noble and Heroick Act of Chriſtian

Virtue; and conſequently ſuch Sufferers being the true Chriſtian Heroes upon Earth, and therefore entitled to a proportionable High Degree of Glory in Heaven. For Proof of which, I deſire to offer briefly the following Conſiderations.

1. This Suffering for Chriſt is the Higheſt Expreſſion of our Faith in him; and Faith, we know, is the Root from which all other Chriſtian Virtues proceed: So that he who has a firm and unſhaken Faith, has all other Virtues in the Seed: He believes the Goſpel, and there is no Doubt all other Virtues and Graces will naturally flow from that Belief. Not but that Suffering may proceed from Vain-Glory and other By-Ends; but we ſpeak here of thoſe Sufferings, which are for Chriſt's ſake, as my Text obſerves; and of them it may be certainly affirmed, that they are the Genuine Fruits of a Lively Faith. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* obſerves the ſame of the Ancient Martyrs and Confeſſors of the Old Teſtament, *Who were tortured not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Reſurrection, that they all obtained a good Report through Faith*, Heb. xi. 39. For, if Faith be, as the Apoſtle there ſaith, *the Subſtance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not ſeen*, certainly they who quit All, even Life it ſelf, upon the Hope of Unſeen Bleſſings, muſt be ſtrongly rooted and grounded in Faith.

2. The

2. The Patient Suffering of Perſecution for Chriſt, is a Proof and Teſtimony of our greateſt Love to him. Our Saviour himſelf inſtances in this, as the Higheſt Expreſſion of Love a Man can have for his Friends, if he is willing to lay down his Life for them. *Greater Love hath no Man than this*, ſaith he, *that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends*, Joh. xv. 13. And if ſo, how can we expreſs greater Love to Chriſt, than by Suffering for him, even to Death?

3. Our Saviour obſerves, that it is an Inſtance of the greateſt Patience and Self-denial; for after he had in the 16th Chapter of St. *Matthew*, ſhewed his Diſciples the Neceſſity of Self-denial; *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me*; he adds immediately, *For whoſoever will ſave his Life ſhall loſe it, and whoſoever will loſe his Life for my ſake, ſhall find it*, Mat. xvi. 24.

4. It is a Sign of the greateſt Courage and Reſolution, to look the greateſt Dangers in the Face, and not to be ſcared by them from our Duty to Chriſt. What can be more Brave and Heroick than that Courage of St. *Paul*'s? Act. xx. 23, 24. *The Holy Ghoſt*, ſaith he, *witneſſeth in every City, ſaying, that Bonds and Afflictions abide me; but none of theſe Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my Courſe with Joy.* And, *Chap.*

xxi. 13. when his Fellow-Chriſtians hung about him, and with Tears endeavour'd to diſſuade him from his Journey to *Jeruſalem*, foreſeeing that Bonds and Afflictions would overtake him there, he anſwer'd reſolutely, *What mean ye to weep, and to break my Heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem for the Name of the Lord Jeſus.*

5. If it be duly conſider'd, it will be found to be a Virtue, which, if True and Genuine, includes all other Virtues in it, and ſuppoſes them all. For, if there were any one Root of Bitterneſs growing up in our Hearts, we could never ſuffer ſo reſolutely for Chriſt. For an Experiment, let us briefly try the foregoing Beatitudes, and we ſhall find how they all concur in the Compoſition of this One Virtue, the Patient Suffering for Chriſt. 1. Firſt, *Poverty in Spirit*, that is, a Diſengagement of Heart from the World, is abſolutely neceſſary to this Virtue of Suffering for Chriſt. For if a Man is not ready to part with his Wealth for Chriſt, how can he be ready to part with his Life for him? For, *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life*, Job ii. 4. And, 2. He that is ready to ſuffer for Chriſt, muſt needs be of a very ſerious Temper, and Mortified to all the Pleaſures of the World and the Fleſh; and ſuch are the *Mourners* deſcrib'd in the ſecond Beatitude: For, *He that hath*

hath ſuffer'd in the Fleſh, ſaith St. *Peter*, *hath ceaſed from Sin*, 1 Pet. iv. 1. 3. He who is ready to ſuffer for Chriſt, hath mortify'd all his Iraſcible Paſſions, nothing being more inconſiſtent than theſe two, the Patient Suffering, and the Angry Reſentment and Revenge of Injuries. And therefore he muſt be *Meek*, whoever ſuffers for Chriſt. 4. He that ſuffers for Chriſt, muſt be a great *Lover of Righteouſneſs*, ſince he chooſes the greateſt Suffering, rather than to redeem it by Sin. 5. Such a one cannot but be *Merciful* both in Giving and in Forgiving. Merciful in Giving; He that is ready to ſacrifice his Life in Chriſt's Service, will he not more readily ſacrifice his Eſtate? And Merciful in Forgiving; for he that is ready to Suffer for Chriſt, has ſubdu'd all Thoughts of Revenge. 6. Such Sufferers for Chriſt muſt be *Pure in Heart*, whether by that be meant *Sincerity*, or *Inward Chaſtity*, or both. For as to Sincerity, what better Trial can we have of it, than that a Man ſtands the fiery Trial it ſelf, and comes out like Gold purified and refined from all its Droſs? Then as to Inward Purity or Chaſtity, the Crucifying of the Fleſh is attended with the *Crucifying of the Affections and Luſts*, Gal. v. 24. 7. And *laſtly*, Such Sufferers for Chriſt muſt be Peaceable, when no Injury can provoke them to Contention or Revenge, but they are ready to ſacrifice their very Lives

for their Duty; And if their Lives, ſure, with leſs Difficulty, all more inferior Concerns. So that we ſee this Virtue of Suffering for Chriſt, includes all the Virtues recommended in the other ſeven Beatitudes in great Height and Perfection.

6. Let it be conſider'd, that this Patient Undergoing of Sufferings for Chriſt, is one of the Greateſt Services that can be done to the Chriſtian Religion; and for Proof of this, I offer the following Conſiderations.

(1.) It is the higheſt Atteſtation that can be given to any Truth, for the Witneſſes of it to ſeal it with their Blood: So that the Doctrines of Chriſtianity, eſpecially thoſe that depend on the Validity of Evidences, (ſuch as are our Saviour's Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, and his other Miracles, on which the Truth of the Doctrines depends) come hereby to have the Higheſt Evidence that any Matters of Fact are capable of. We believe a Witneſs firmly, when we Obſerve that no Temptation whatſoever is able to byaſs him, or to make him in the leaſt vary from the Stedfaſtneſs of his Teſtimony.

(2.) It is this Grace, which furniſhes the Church with Abundance of the Nobleſt Examples of a Confirmed Virtue, ſuch as is above all the Terrors of the World. And ſuch Living and Dying Patterns of Virtue are better fitted

fitted to make Impreſſions on Mankind, than all the beſt Precepts that can be dictated.

(3.) Confeſſors and Martyrs have always been found, by Experience, to be the great Awakeners of Mankind, to bring them to Conſider both the Truth and Importance of Religion. It excites a laudable Curioſity in many, to enquire after the Knowledge of that Religion, for which Men are not afraid to ſuffer; and it diſpoſes the World to believe they muſt be in good earneſt, who are ready to Die for it. It gives Men likewiſe a favourable Prepoſſeſſion as to thoſe hidden Joys and unſeen Glories, which are ſo prevalent with Martyrs and Confeſſors; ſo that inſtead of deterring the more Serious and Thinking Part of Mankind from the Suffering Religion, it has quite contrary Effects, both in Confirming its Profeſſors, and in Making Converts.

(4.) This demonſtrates to the World, that the Chriſtian Religion was not propagated by Carnal Weapons, but by the Power and Demonſtration of the Spirit. If a Religion could make its way without the Countenance of Laws and Authority, without Force or Fraud, merely by its Own Reaſonableneſs, joined with the holy Lives and patient Sufferings of its Profeſſors, it is a great Preſumption that ſuch a Religion is of God, and not of Men. But,

7. And

7. And *laſtly*, to ſhew the Abſolute Neceſſity of this Virtue of Suffering for Chriſt, to the Chriſtian Religion, let it be conſider'd, how impoſſible it is that Chriſtianity could have ſubſiſted, or have made its way in the World without it. Chriſtianity found the Pagan Idols every where in Poſſeſſion; and this being the Caſe, it is not to be imagin'd how, without Confeſſion and Martyrdom, Chriſtianity could ever have got Poſſeſſion in the World. For Idolatry could not have been thrown out without ſome Struggle; and it muſt be believ'd, that the Idolatrous Princes would certainly make uſe of their Power to defend it, and to keep out the Chriſtian Religion, which is ſo great an Enemy to the Luſts and Vices of Men. Suppoſing then Force and Perſecution every where employ'd, as indeed they were, to defend Idolatry, and to keep out Chriſtianity; and ſuppoſing there had been no ſuch Duty as this of Suffering for Chriſt; what muſt have been done? Either Chriſtians muſt have roſe up in Rebellion againſt their ſeveral Princes and Governors, and have defended themſelves, and propagated their Religion by the Sword, or they muſt have quietly ſubmitted to the Authority of the Rulers, and, whatever they had privately believed, muſt have publickly profeſs'd the Religion of the State. Now both thoſe ways Chriſtianity muſt have been deſtroy'd,

ſtroy'd. If Chriſtians had gone into the way of Force and Violence, then inſtead of Meekneſs, Patience, Peaceableneſs, Obedience to Magiſtrates, and Reſpect to Government, Juſtice, and Love of Enemies, which are now the Life and Ornament of the Chriſtian Profeſſion; we muſt have had Anger, Revenge, Miſrule and Rebellion, Murders, Rapines, Conqueſt, and all the other direful Effects of the Carnal Weapon ſet up. And then I ask, if this would have been the Chriſtian Religion? For if we take away Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, Self-denial, Peaceableneſs, Obedience to Government, both Active and Paſſive, Love of Enemies, and the like; and if, inſtead thereof, we ſet up the Spirit of the World, Anger, Revenge, Murders, Rapines, Club-law, and Miſrule, and call all this Chriſtianity; this would be only to retain the Name, but to loſe the Thing, and to make the Chriſtian Religion a Cloak and Pretext for all manner of Wickedneſs. Again, if Chriſtians, leaving the way of Force, had gone into the way of Complaiſance, and had outwardly obey'd all the Edicts of Princes, had gone to the Idol Temples, joined in their falſe and Idolatrous Worſhips, burnt their Bibles, outwardly blaſphemed Chriſt, and renounced Chriſtianity; contenting themſelves with an Inward Belief in their Hearts, or at beſt a ſecret Worſhip in their Chambers; then inſtead

inſtead of Truth and Sincerity, and Open Profeſſion and Practice of Chriſtianity, we ſhould have had nothing but Hypocriſy, Diſſimulation, Open Idolatry, Lying, Equivocating, Perjury, Cowardice, and the Fear of Men preferr'd to the Fear of God. And could all this have been conſiſtent with Chriſtianity? There was no Middle way left but this of the Croſs; a way indeed full of Difficulties, and unpleaſant to Fleſh and Blood; but Brave, and Honeſt, and Honourable, and leading directly both to Inward Peace, and to an Ample Reward in Glory.

So much for the firſt Thing I propos'd to conſider at this Time, namely, Why ſuch an High Degree of Reward is promis'd to them that Suffer for Chriſt. I ſhould proceed next to the other Conſideration in the Text, for our Rejoycing, when we ſuffer for Chriſt or our Duty; namely, the Uſage of the Prophets; *For ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you*: As if he had ſaid, " It is no new thing that Good " Men, eſpecially ſuch as have been ſent to reform " the World, have met with ſuch bad Treatment " in it: Take the Prophets for an Example both " of the Wickedneſs of the World, and of the " Patience of the Saints". But this Topick of Direction and Conſolation I have not now Time to conſider, as it deſerves; and ſhall therefore refer it to another Opportunity.

God

God bleſs what we have heard; and to Him, Father Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, Might, Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SER-

SERMON XXIII.

MAT. V. 12.

— For ſo perſecuted they the Pro-phets, which were before you.

The Ninth Sermon on this Text.

OUR Saviour having, in the Beginning of this Verſe, exhorted his Diſciples to *Rejoyce, and to be exceeding glad*, whenever they ſhould be put to ſuffer for Him or their Duty, doth immediately back that Exhortation with Two Arguments or Encourage-

ragements: One is, that their Reward for heir Patient Suffering ſhould be Great in Heaven; and the Other, that the Prophets in heir Days had met with the very ſame Uſage.

Now having formerly ſpoke to the Exhortation, and likewiſe to the Firſt of the Encouragements, the Great Reward reſerved for ſuch Perſons in Heaven; I proceed now to he Second, taken from the Example of the Prophets. *For, ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* As if he had ſaid, "Ye have all "Reaſon to rejoyce, when ye come to ſuffer for "well-doing, for as this was the conſtant Lot of "the Prophets, thoſe Good Men who went before "you in the Office of Reforming Mankind, and "in preparing Men for the Kingdom of the *Meſ-*"*ſiah*; ſo they have left you an Example of Pa-"tient Suffering under all their Perſecutions.

In Speaking to the Words, and for purſuing our Saviour's Intention in them, I ſhall apply my ſelf to theſe Three or Four Particulars:

1. To ſhew in general, that it is matter of Comfort and Joy to be found in the ſame way with Good Men that have gone before us, and to meet with the ſame Treatment that they have met with from the World.

2. To

2. To clear up the matter of Fact, by ſhewing how the Prophets were reviled, calumniated and perſecuted in their Days, for doing their Duty.

3. To conſider the Parity of Reaſon between the Circumſtances of the Prophets, and thoſe of our Lord's Diſciples.

4. To draw ſome Inferences with relation to our Duty, both from the Good Examples of the Courage and Patience of the Perſecuted Prophets, and from the Bad Examples of the Perſecuting World.

I. *Firſt*, in general, that it is matter of Comfort and Joy to be found in the ſame way with Good Men that have gone before us, and to meet with the ſame Treatment that they met with from the World. This is the Foundation, as I apprehend it, upon which this Argument of our Saviour's is built. As in Travelling in an unknown way, it is both a great Comfort and great Security to have skilful Guides along with us, ſuch as are univerſally acknowledg'd to be very expert in it; ſo in the Conduct of our Lives through this wretched World, what greater Comfort can there be, than to have the Company of the Prophets and

and Apoſtles, who by the general Conſent of all, are the ſureſt Guides in the way to Heaven?

Now to ſet this in a clearer Light, if it were not too great a Digreſſion, it would be proper enough to conſider, upon what good Grounds this Comfort from the Example of the Prophets is built; *viz.* Upon their being inſpired by God as to their Doctrine; upon the bright Examples of their Lives; their Patient Sufferings; and the Vindication of their Fame, after the Clouds of Perſecution were over. I ſhall touch theſe Things but curſorily, becauſe they were all Truths fully acknowledg'd by the *Jews*, our Saviour's Hearers, and therefore there is no Occaſion to prove them, as would be neceſſary, if they had been controverted.

1. The Prophets were in High Eſteem, as being Extraordinary Perſons raiſed up by God, who, by their Heavenly Credentials, gave Authority to the Doctrine which they deliver'd: For they either wrought Miracles in Confirmation of their Divine Miſſion; or they had the Atteſtation of ſome other undoubted Prophet, who had wrought Miracles; or at leaſt by Purity of Doctrine, and Holineſs of Life, and Agreement with other foregoing Prophecies, they eſtabliſhed their Authority.

2. The great Zeal of the Prophets to reprove Vice, and to plant and eſtabliſh Virtue with a very particular Courage and Freedom,

is very conſpicuous in all their Prophecies, and this, no doubt, gave them great Authority.

3. The ſame was eſtabliſh'd by their Patient Sufferings; for both from my Text, and many other Paſſages of Holy Scripture, it appears that moſt of them were Martyrs.

4. Tho' they had been exceedingly calumniated and abuſed in their Life-time, yet by the Accompliſhment of their Prophecies after their Death, and the ſignal Judgments of God upon their Perſecutors, their Fame came to be reſtor'd, and thoſe Clouds of Suſpicion and Calumny to be diſſipated; ſo that in our Saviour's Days all Perſons had a good Opinion of them, and a bad one of their Perſecutors, not excepting the Scribes and Phariſees themſelves, who honour'd their Tombs and Memories, tho' they follow'd the Actions of their Perſecutors, as appears from our Saviour's Reprehenſion of them, *Mat.* xxiii. 29. *Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites; becauſe ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garniſh the Sepulchres of the Righteous, and ſay, if we had been in the Days of our Fathers, we would not have been Partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets.*

It is no wonder then, if an Extraordinary Commiſſion from God, Pure Doctrine, Holy Lives, a Zealous Reformation of Vice, Patient Sufferings, and re-eſtabliſhed clear Reputations, made all Men think it an Honour to be found

found in the ſame way with the Prophets.

II. But now to go on with our Saviour's Argument; the Prophets, notwithſtanding all theſe extraordinary Qualifications, were reviled, calumniated, and perſecuted in their Days, for doing their Duty. I ſhall give you but a few Examples of this out of a great many; for it is ſo Copious a Subject, that one might tranſcribe a great part of the Lives of the Prophets, in Confirmation of it.

I begin with *Moſes*, that eminent Prophet, who did ſo extraordinary Services for the People of *Iſrael*, in delivering them from the Houſe of Bondage, and in ſettling them upon a good foot of Laws and Government; yet how ungratefully was he treated, not only by the rebellious *Corah* and his Company, but by the whole Body of the People? The Hiſtory is full of their Murmurings and Diſcontents, of their Flying in the Face of *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and of their Longing for the Onions and Fleſh-pots of *Egypt*; nay, of their ſetting up the Gods of *Egypt*, to worſhip them. And the Rebellion of *Corah* ſhews how far the Prejudices againſt *Moſes* were gone, there being no leſs than Two Hundred and Fifty Princes of the Aſſembly, Men of Renown, and famous in the Congregation, engaged in that Conſpiracy. And they carry'd their Accuſations to a very great

Height, as if he cheated and miſled the People, and was ſetting up for himſelf both in Church and State, as appears from the ſtrange Remonſtrance they made, when ſent for by *Moſes*, they refuſed to come. *Is it a ſmall thing*, ſay they, *that thou haſt brought us up out of a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey, to kill us in the Wilderneſs, except thou make thy ſelf altogether a Prince over us? Moreover, thou haſt not brought us into a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey, or given us Inheritance of Fields and Vineyards: Wilt thou put out the Eyes of theſe Men? We will not come up*, Num. xvi. 13.

To go on as far as *Samuel*; We find, after a Wiſe and Good Government of the People for a great many Years, in his Old Age they threw him off, and by a general Combination forc'd him to conſent to a Change of Government. And not contented to have laid him aſide from his Civil Dignity, *Saul* likewiſe invaded his Prieſtly Office, and took upon himſelf to offer Sacrifice; 1 *Sam.* xiii. 9. In this King's Days too it was, that upon a very ſmall Pretence of a Crime, he cauſed Eighty five Prieſts to be put to death, and their whole City, Men, Women, Children and Cattle, to be put to the Sword; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 18.

Elijah complain'd, in his Days, of the People of *Iſrael*, that they had forſaken God's Cove-

Covenant, thrown down his Altars, and ſlain his Prophets with the Sword; and that he was the only one that was left; and that they ſought his Life too, to take it away, 1 *King.* xix. 10. And it was very true; for both *Ahab* and *Jezebel*, the King and Queen, were hunting for his Life. Good *Obadiah* told him, that there was no Nation or Kingdom to which the King had not ſent to ſeek him, 1 *King.* xviii. 10. And *Jezebel* ſent him a threatening Meſſage, that ſhe would have his Life by to morrow at that time, 1 *King.* xix. 2.

Aſa impriſon'd the Prophet *Hanani*, for a wholſome Reproof he gave him, becauſe of his Truſting to Men more than to God, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 10.

Joaſh ſtoned the Prophet *Zachariah*, only for giving good Counſel againſt Idolatry.

The Prophet *Jeremiah* was caſt into the Dungeon.

The Prophet *Iſaiah* was ſawn aſunder.

The Prophet *Daniel* was thrown into the Lion's Den. And *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abednego*, into a Burning fiery Furnace.

The *Maccabees* were put to cruel Tortures.

And a little while after this Diſcourſe, *John the Baptiſt*, the laſt of the Prophets, was beheaded by *Herod*. So that it was no new thing to hear of the Perſecution of the Beſt of Men.

But it is not enough to have ſhew'd the matter of Fact, that the Prophets in their Days were perſecuted, unleſs we ſhew likewiſe upon what Account thoſe Perſecutions were brought upon them; for that is neceſſary to the making out of our Saviour's Argument, that *So perſecuted they the Prophets, which were before them.* Had the Prophets been idle, pragmatical Men, ſtriking in with diſcontented Parties in the State, ſowing Diſcord and Diviſions; or had they been covetous, worldly Men, involved in a great deal of Buſineſs with others, creating to themſelves Enemies on that Account; or had they been immoral Men, expoſing themſelves to the Laſh of the Law by their evil Deeds: It had not been much to be wonder'd at, if they had provoked Governments, or had created to themſelves a Multitude of private Enemies. But never were any Men further from the leaſt Suſpicion of any of theſe Things. As to the Civil Government, they commonly pay'd a great deal of Reſpect to it, and never refus'd their Active Obedience, except ſome Edict came that touch'd them in point of Conſcience, and requir'd their Idolatrous or ſome other Sinful Complyance. Even during the Captivity, they were for ſeeking the Peace of the City, to the which the Lord had caus'd them to be carry'd away Captives, and for Praying to him for it, as knowing that

that in the Peace thereof they ſhould have Peace, Jer. xxix. 7. And as to their worldly Concerns and Dealings, we have Reaſon to think they were very ſmall; for we never hear of any Law-Suits, or Controverſies, or Quarrels about Worldly Affairs they had with any Man; as the Prophet *Jeremiah* ſays, *chap.* xv. *ver.* 10. *Wo is me, my Mother, that thou haſt born me a Man of Striſe, and a Man of Contention to the whole Earth: I have neither lent on Uſury, nor have Men lent to me on Uſury, yet every one of them doth curſe me.* And as for Immoralities, we do not find they were accus'd of them, ſo much as by their Enemies. So far from it, that they were the greateſt Terror to Vice, and vicious Perſons in their Days. Even their vicious Princes dreaded the Sight of a Prophet, if they were about any, tho' ever ſo cleanly convey'd, piece of Wickedneſs. An Example of which we have in *Ahab*, when ſurpriz'd by *Elijah*, as he was taking Poſſeſſion of *Naboth*'s Vineyard; *Haſt thou found me, O mine Enemy?* ſays he. And he anſwer'd, *I have found thee, becauſe thou haſt ſold thy ſelf to work evil in the Sight of the Lord*, 1 *King.* xxi. 20. But what was it then, if neither Sedition, nor Meddling in the World, nor Immoralities, brought on thoſe Storms of Perſecutions; what was it that did it? Something there muſt be that made their Crimes to be near of Kin with thoſe of

the Chriſtians, that ſhould make our Saviour compare their Sufferings together.

If we enquire into the Crimes of the Prophets, we ſhall find they were commonly either the Oppoſing of Idolatry, or the bold Reproving of Vice and Immorality, or the Denouncing of God's Judgments to the Impenitent, or the Calling for and Preſſing a publick Reformation of Manners, or the Oppoſing of falſe Prophets; all very dangerous Employments; in which we ſhall find they were ſucceeded by the Chriſtians, both in their pretended Crimes and Sufferings. But this, perhaps, will come better in under,

III. The *Third* Head of Diſcourſe I propos'd from the Words, which was, to conſider the Parity of Reaſon between the Circumſtances of the Prophets, and thoſe of our Lord's Diſciples. In which there are theſe Three Things to be conſider'd.

1. That the Prophets had to do with the ſame perverſe People as the Chriſtians had to treat with.

2. That the Buſineſs and Office of the Prophets was much the ſame with that of the Chriſtians.

3. That the Obſtacles, the Prophets met with, were the very ſame with thoſe of the Chriſtians. And therefore it was but reaſonable

ble to conclude their Treatment would be much the ſame.

1. I ſay, the Prophets had to do with the ſame perverſe People as the Chriſtians had to treat with. They were their Forefathers who perſecuted the Prophets. St. *Luke* expreſſes my Text thus; *Luk.* vi. 23. *For in like manner did their Fathers unto the Prophets.* And elſewhere our Saviour reckons it one and the ſame Spirit of Perſecution, which acted in their Fathers and in them; and he calls them, *The Children of them which killed the Prophets.* Mat. xxiii. 31. and abandons them, as it were, to fill up the Meaſure of their Fathers. He foretells, that they ſhould miſuſe the Prophets, and Wiſe Men and Scribes, by Killing, Crucifying, Scourging, and Perſecuting them; and for that Reaſon, he brings them in not only as guilty of the Blood immediately ſhed by themſelves, but likewiſe as acceſſory to all that which had been ſhed by their Fathers, as by their Spirit and Actions approving it, and therefore accountable for the whole: *That upon you*, ſays he, *may come all the righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth, from the Blood of righteous Abel, unto the Blood of Zacharias, whom ye ſlew between the Temple and the Altar*; Verſe 35. In ſhort then, it was the ſame Bloody People, the ſame Perſecuting *Jeruſalem*, which kill'd the Prophets, and ſton'd them that were ſent to them,

them, which both the Ancient Prophets, and our Saviour and his Diſciples, had to do with.

2. Another Thing in which the Parity conſiſted, was in the Commiſſion and Employment of the Prophets, which was the very ſame with that of Chriſt's Diſciples. The Prophets had an immediate Commiſſion and Unction from God, to go and reform that ſinful People, and to prepare them for the Reception of the *Meſſiah*. Chriſt's Diſciples had the like Unction and Commiſſion to prepare People, by Repentance and Amendment of Life, to believe in the *Meſſiah* already come. The Old Prophets had many a Rancountre with Idolatry and falſe Prophets among the *Jews*. Chriſtians had Idolatry to rancountre all the World over, together with the Scribes and Phariſees among the *Jews*, and the Idolatrous Prieſts among the *Gentiles*. The Old Prophets boldly reproved Vice in all Ranks of Men, from the Higheſt to the Loweſt. And ſo our Saviour's Diſciples were brought before Magiſtrates and Kings for his ſake; and with wonderful Freedom and Boldneſs told them their Duty. The Old Prophets denounced God's Judgments againſt an Impenitent People in their Days: And ſo did our Saviour and his Diſciples denounce God's heavy Judgments, more particularly in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which prov'd ſo incorrigible

gible by all the Calls and Methods of the Goſpel.

3. A *Third* Thing in which the Parity conſiſted between the Circumſtances of the Prophets, and that of our Saviour's Diſciples, was, that the one and the other had the ſame Difficulties and Obſtructions to ſtruggle with; namely, the Men in Power both in Church and State, who were poſſeſs'd with a Spirit of Pride and Covetouſneſs, Eaſe and Luxury, which was an utter Enemy to all Reformation, and to all Thoughts and Notions of a Spiritual Kingdom. This was not only a Worldly, but a Bloody Spirit, employing the utmoſt Carnal Force to withſtand the Truth. They had both of them to do with the moſt inveterate Prejudices and Prepoſſeſſions of Education, Temper, and Worldly Intereſt againſt the Truth, back'd with Force, Power, and Authority. And they were both of them deſtitute of any other means to promote the Truth, except the Power and Demonſtration of the Spirit. The Weapons of their Warfare were not Carnal, but Mighty, through God, for the pulling down of ſtrong Holds. So that it might well be expected the ſame Attempts upon the ſame ſort of People would have the ſame Effects; namely, to raiſe a great Storm of Perſecution againſt the Reformers.

IV. I come now, in the laſt Place, to draw ſome Inferences, with relation to Practice, both from the good Examples of the Prophets, and from the bad Examples of the Unthankful Perſecuting World.

Firſt, From the Examples of the Prophets, there are theſe Three Leſſons we may learn. I ſhall do little more than juſt mention them, leaving the Improvement of them to your further Meditations.

1. From their Example, let us learn an Honeſty, Courage and Stedfaſtneſs in doing our Duty, notwithſtanding the many Arts the World uſes to diſcourage us in it. It was a very comfortleſs thing to have the Frowns and Hatred of the Princes and Great Men in their Days; to be brow-beaten and run down by Paraſites and falſe Prophets; to have the Curſes of the People for the Severity of their Life and Doctrine; nay, to be Impriſon'd, Arraign'd, Condemn'd, and puniſh'd, as if they had been the Greateſt Malefactors: And yet theſe Brave Men were not diſcourag'd from doing their Duty, leaving the Succeſs to God. Let us go and do likewiſe. It is really a moſt ſhameful thing to ſee how Bribes and Flattery on the one hand, and Threats and Diſcouragements on the other, do commonly change Mens Principles and Opinions, at leaſt their Practice and Profeſſion, and inſtead of the Honeſt, make them

them act the Knaviſh time-ſerving part. The Prophets were Men of Probity and Courage, and knew not what it was to ſooth People in their Sins, but would tell them their Duty, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear, be the Hazard what it would.

2. The Patience of the Prophets under the Croſs, is an Example well worthy of our Imitation. *Take my Brethren the Prophets, who have ſpoken in the Name of the Lord*, ſays St. *James*, *for an Example of Suffering Affliction, and of Patience*, Jam. v. 10. As they would not betray a good Cauſe, ſo neither could they be provok'd by ill Uſage, to Tumults, Sedition, and Rebellion; but with Meekneſs committed themſelves to him who judgeth righteouſly.

3. There is a *Third* Thing we may obſerve for our Comfort from the Example of the Prophets, which is, that tho' they were perſecuted in their own Time, yet all Men became quickly ſenſible of the unjuſt ill Uſage they had, and therefore bleſſed and honoured their Memories. For ſuch is the Nature of Virtue, that tho' it may be under a Cloud from Malice and Envy, and Mens Incorrigibleneſs in their evil Courſes, yet it is a moſt lovely Thing in it ſelf, and gains ground in point of Reputation with Poſterity; tho' they are not ſo apt to imitate, as to honour and commend it. So the Scribes and Phariſees in our Savi-

Saviour's Days, even while they were poſſeſſed with a moſt perſecuting Spirit themſelves, yet built the Tombs of the Prophets, and condemned the Perſecutions of their Forefathers. Let this be ſome Encouragement to us in well-doing, that howſoever we may happen to be miſrepreſented, and under a Cloud, nay, perſecuted for the time, we ſhall ſmell ſweet to Poſterity, and ſhall embalm our Reputations beyond any thing that wicked Men can do to preſerve their Memories from ſtinking and rotting in the World.

I ſhall conclude after I have recommended a Caution from the bad Example of the People of *Iſrael* in my Text. What is it our Saviour here reprehends? It is a Perſecuting Spirit in general, and a Diſreſpect to the Prophets and their Meſſage in particular. If we would then learn Inſtruction from bad Examples, let us learn to avoid a Spirit of Perſecution, and to treat our Adverſaries with Gentleneſs and Meekneſs. Particularly, as to all God's Meſſengers, let us learn to reſpect them for their Works ſake, and to ſtrengthen their Hearts and Hands in doing good; remembring what our Saviour ſaid for the Comfort of the Miniſters of the Goſpel; *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*, Mat. x. 40. Alas, how many People are there in the World, who have ſo little Reſpect for the Goſpel, that they are ready to give the ſame Reception to the Miniſters of it, as the *Gergeſenes* gave to Chriſt himſelf,

ſelf, that is, *to pray them to depart out of their Coaſts?*

Thus now I have at laſt finiſhed, through God's Aſſiſtance, my Explication of the Beatitudes, which were ſome of the firſt Leſſons our Saviour gave to his Diſciples. I have no time to make any General Obſervations from the whole. Only in a word, this I believe can't eſcape every one's Notice, that in order to our being good Chriſtians, it is abſolutely neceſſary that we be Men of good Morals; and that Vicious Perſons, till they are changed and renewed, ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; that is, are neither fit to be Members of the Chriſtian Church here, nor to be admitted to Heaven hereafter. *If ye know theſe Things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, let us render, as is due, all Praiſe, Honour, and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The End of the Firſt Volume.

